OF THE

AUTHORITY

OF

COUNCILS,

AND THE

Rule of Faith.

By a Perſon of Quality.

With an ANSWER to the Eight *Theſes* laid down for the trial of the *Engliſh* Reformation, in the Book that came laſt Week from *Oxford.*

LONDON;
Printed for *R. Clavel, W. Rogers,* and *S. Smith.* 1687.

IMPRIMATUR,

Ex Edib. Lamb.
Mart. 22. 1686.

Guil. Needham, *RR^mo in Christo Patri ac D^nō D.* Wilhelmo *Archiep. Cant. a Sacris. Domest.*

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THE PREFACE.

IF there be an Infallible Judge of Controverſies in the Church, it is fit that ſo great an Authority ſhould bear down all before it, and be inſtead of a thouſand Anſwers to all Objections: But 'tis as true on the other ſide, that if the Judge has erred, he cannot be Infallible; and if any man tells me, 'tis a bold thing to ſay of an Infallible Judge, that he has erred; I can be even with him, by anſwering, that 'tis as bold for a Judge that has erred, to ſay, he is Infallible: So that the Point muſt be pleaded at the bar of every mans private Judgment, before it can be gain'd; and if a Judge were here that could not err, he would confeſs, I think, that it could not be put to a fairer Iſſue than this; Whether I have, or have not, more reaſon to believe, that the Judg has err'd; *than I have to believe, that 'tis* impoſſible he ſhould?

The Claim to Infallibility is ſet up no where, that I know of, but in the Church of Rome; *and I have had this reaſon to wiſh it might be made good, becauſe it would have ſaved me the labour of enquiring any further; whereas, if it be void, all the particular Controverſies we have with her, muſt be examined by themſelves.*

I must confess likewise, that having received my Baptism and Education in the Church of England, *and upon mature deliberation, having made that my own Act now, which was heretofore the act of my Parents; I could not but wish also, that upon trial she might be found faithful; but I hope that no considerations of this sort, have byassed me one way or other, to partiality; I am sure if any has, 'tis more than I am sensible of; and if indifference on which side the truth lies, be any advantage towards the discerning it, I have so much the more reason to be assured, that I have not been mistaken in the main, because I have sincerely desired, and according to my capacity, endeavoured not to be mistaken at all.*

That there is a necessity of a Living, Infallible, Visible Guide in order to Christian Faith, I could never be perswaded to, since I knew my self a Believer of the Holy Scriptures, and of Universal Tradition, without believing any such Guide; and as for those Doctrines of the Church of Rome, *which the Church of* England *rejects; I cannot but think that if they are to be made out, either by Scripture, or Tradition, I may be as well convinced of it, by a reasonable man, who is yet not Infallible, as I am already convinced, that those Articles of Faith, in which both Churches agree, are contained in the Scriptures; and that the Scriptures stand upon the evidence of Universal Tradition. So that if I do already believe thus much upon rational grounds, as I am sure I do, and may be led to the belief of all the rest (if I do not yet believe enough) upon the same grounds, as surely I may, if they stand upon the same grounds; I cannot feel the necessity of an Infallible, Visible, Living Guide, to make me a Believer.*

But if God has indeed given such a Guide to his Church, I am ready with all thankfulness to submit my self to him, notwithstanding my perswasion that there is no necessity of such

ſuch a one in order to Faith; For if I am not to preſume, that God who always does that which is beſt, has therefore done whatſoever ſeems to me to be ſo; much leſs can I conclude, that he has not done that for his Creatures, which I ſee no neceſſity that he ſhould have done for the attaining of their end; eſpecially ſince 'tis evident, that in his abundant Goodneſs, he has given us plentiful means of happineſs, both for this, and a better life, over and above what is abſolutely neceſſary to either.

My buſineſs therefore was to ſee, Whether God hath left ſuch a guide in this Church, as we are told of. To which end it was neceſſary in the firſt place to conſider theſe words of our Bleſſed Saviour to his Apoſtles, Go teach all Nations, *&c. And,* Lo I am with you always even to the end of the Word. *And,* the ſpirit ſhall lead you into all truth: *and thoſe other Texts of Scripture, which are ſaid to contain the Promiſe, or at leaſt the ſuppoſition of ſuch a Guide. Now theſe places have been ſo ſifted on both ſides, that if the power of Intereſt and Paſſion were not too well known, one would wonder that both parties have not long ſince concurred in that Truth, which would have yielded equal Triumph to the Victors and the Vanquiſhed.*

It is needleſs here to inſiſt upon a thing ſo well known, as the ſenſe of our Divines concerning theſe places; I ſhall only ſay, that whereas none of theſe Texts ſeem to have any great difficulty in them, they muſt be in my Judgment the moſt abſtruſe difficult places in all the Bible, if that be the true ſenſe of them, which is maintained by the other ſide.

So that ſince the proof of ſuch a Guide being promiſed, is ſo obſcure, if it be a proof at all, it is but reaſonable to expect that it ſhould be ſupplied afterwards, by ſome conſiderable evidence, that in Fact there hath been ſuch a Guide in the Church, and ſtill is; and conſequently that the event ſhould be a notable help to the interpretation of thoſe places

of Scripture, which, as 'tis ſaid, do either promiſe or ſuppoſe ſuch a Guide.

But when I conſider that ſuch a Guide is pretended to no where, but in the Roman *Communion; how loth ſoever I am to remember the particular Controverſies we have with that Church, till this be decided, yet do what I can, it comes into my mind, that it is incomparably more evident to me, that ſhe has eſtabliſhed ſome Doctrines and Practices contrary to the Scripture, than that the Scripture has promiſed any ſuch Guide at all, and ſtill much more, than that this Guide ſhould be found in the* Roman *Church.*

And that which yet more perplexes the Cauſe is, that the Romaniſts *do not agree where this Infallibility is lodged; there are ſeveral pretenders to it, whoſe Titles are defended by their ſeveral Champions, with a zeal anſwerable to the greatneſs of the Cauſe. It ſeemed ſtrange to me, that a pretence to infallibility amongſt them, ſhould be better ſecured by not agreeing, than by an open and unanimous declaration where to fix it, and no where elſe: This I thought did not look like that aſſurance which fears no oppoſition, but rather like the Caution of ſome wary Prince in the day of Battel, who (knowing that the ſucceſs of his Cauſe and Party depends upon the ſafety of his Perſon), apparels ſeveral of his Followers every way like himſelf, both to amuſe the enemy, and that ſo long as any of them are ſafe, his Party may not ſeem to want an Head: Now this Policy, (if it is any ſort of ſecurity againſt their Adverſaries) certainly renders them very much unable in many caſes, to ſuccour their Friends, whom it leaves in as great perplexities, as they pretend we are, ſince they will be at a loſs to which of the Pretenders to addreſs themſelves for reſolution of their doubts.*

Of all the Pretenders, the moſt likely ſeemed to be the Authority of General Councils; *and therefore being re-*

ſolved

ſolved not to truſt private Writers of either ſide, I undertook to ſearch the Councils themſelves, believing that I ſhould find not only what they, but what Popes have done too in the Eſtabliſhing of Doctrine. The pretence of the Infallibility of Oral Tradition, is ſo new and weak, that there is nothing to make it conſiderable, but the honour that has been done it, by an exquiſite Confutation.

Dr. Tillotſons Rule of Faith.

In a convenient Library, I have by me Binius *his Edition of the Councils, printed at* Cologue, A.D. 1606. *I thought I could not chuſe one of more unqueſtionable Authority amongſt the Romaniſts; for beſides, that he Dedicates his Book to Pope* Paul *the* 5th, *and to Cardinal* Baronius, *at whoſe deſire, as he ſaies, he made thoſe Collections; and that he has the Approbation of* Xilander *Profeſſor of Divinity at* Cologne; *he diſcovers in his Notes upon the Councils, ſo great a Zeal for the* Roman *Church, and eſpecially for the Papal Power, that I believed none could ſuſpect he would falſify Records to the prejudice of that Cauſe, which he ſo zealouſly defends.*

Now if the Decrees in Matters of Faith, of any Pretender to Infallibility, eſtabliſhed at one time, were inconſiſtent with Decrees in Matters of Faith which were made at another time; I may ſpare any farther Labour of inquiring, what Proofs any other Perſons have produced to maintain that Title, becauſe it has by its own Acts diſprov'd and depriv'd it ſelf. And I am ſure, that if General Councils have contradicted one another, I have more reaſon to believe that they have erred, than any Man can ſhew me that they cannot err. For no man can have more Reaſon to believe any thing, than he has for this, that Contradictions cannot be true.

Our Church has a reverend eſteem for the four firſt General Council; we embrace their Confeſſions of Faith, and whatſoever they defined to be Hereſy, we judge to be ſo. If

it

it be demanded why we approve of them, and not of all the reſt; we anſwer, Becauſe their Determinations in Matters of Faith are manifeſtly warranted by the Holy Scriptures. If this anſwer ſatisfie not, let us inquire whether the Romaniſts *themſelves do univerſally adhere to the Decrees in Matter of Faith, of all General Councils. If it appears that they do, I ſhall then think my ſelf obliged to give a farther anſwer. But if they do not, then any Reaſon which they can allege, may upon as good, nay better grounds ſuffice for us.*

OF

OF THE AUTHORITY OF COUNCILS.

THAT General Councils have not that Authority, as to oblige us without more ado to believe all that they define, is what we of this Church may modeſtly enough deny; when 'tis evident that *Bellarmin*, *Baronius* and *Binius*, with the reſt of the *Roman-Court*-Flatterers, do in reality give leſs deference to General Councils, than we of the Church of *England* do. For tho we do not think they are Infallible, yet as we believe that ſome of them have not erred; ſo where Force and Fraud are not uſed, we think the Concluſions of ſo venerable an Aſſembly, even thoſe that agree not with our preſent Sentiments, ought to be well conſidered, and not rejected without manifeſt Reaſon for ſo doing.

But altho theſe Courtiers find it very convenient to boaſt that their Faith is eſtabliſhed upon General Councils; yet 'tis plain that they only affect the glorious *Name* of ſuch an Authority, and that in good earneſt they value not the *Thing*.

Bellarmin

Tom. 2. lib. 1, 2. *Bellarmin* has two Books, the one of *Councils and the Church*, the other of *the Authority of Councils*; in both which he ſpeaks of them very magnificently now and then. But after all his Flouriſhes, their Authority is in truth nothing, but that of the Pope is all in all with him. One would have thought that in that Chapter, the very Title whereof is, That *the Biſhops in Council are not Councellors, but Judges*; he ſhould have induſtriouſly diſſembled his partiality for the Pope; and yet, even there, he gives him the power to *follow the leſſer part of the Council in forming the Decree*; and that forſooth, becauſe he is not only *Preſident* of the Council, but *Supreme Prince* of the Church alſo. Which is ſuch ſtuff from a man that would make the Biſhops in Councils, *Judges*, that I cannot but be aſhamed and grieved to find either ſo much Folly, or ſo much Inſincerity amongſt the Learned Men of this way, in laying down the very foundation of their Faith.

De Conc. & Eccl. lib. 1. c. 18.

Why ſhould theſe Men pretend to aſſign the Conditions that are requiſite to a General Council, as if ſome very great matter depended upon it, when in effect they tell us alſo, That 'tis ſo inſignificant a thing in point of Authority, when 'tis once aſſembled. As for that fourth Condition required by *Bellarmin*, How reaſonable ſoever it is in it ſelf, 'tis yet in him very unaccountable, *viz.* that *ſome Biſhops at leaſt come together from the greater part of the Chriſtian Provinces: For inſtance, if the Council be in the* Eaſt, *it ſhould be thought ſufficient that many Biſhops meet together out of all the Provinces of the* Eaſt; *but out of all the* Weſt, *that ſome be ſent to ſupply the place of others.* With this I could be well enough content; for as the Exigence of Affairs never did, ſo I doubt it never will permit all the Biſhops of the World to come together. And therefore, upon the Indiction

De Conc. lib. 1. c. 16.

diction of a General Council, that muſt go for one, which is as General as can well be, which is *Free* at leaſt, and from which no Biſhop is excluded, and in which a competent number of Biſhops from all parts is Aſſembled. But I would gladly know why, even thus many Biſhops ſhould be put to the trouble, if the Pope has that power which is given him by ſo great a part of the *Roman* Church, as their Courtiers and their Followers make? If in forming the Decree, he has Authority to follow the leſſer part, if he pleaſes ſo to do? If he can thus not only avoid all they do, when they have given their ſuffrages, but determine directly againſt the major part? If this be ſo, what need can there be of General Councils at all, to determine Controverſies of Faith? Eſpecially, ſince we are told alſo, that *particular Councils being confirmed by the Pope, cannot err?* What Authority then has a General above a particular Council? For a General Council may err without the Pope, and a particular Council cannot err with him. The Pope, if this be true, has no more to do, but to get the Biſhops of his own Dioceſs together upon any occaſion, and then to declare to all the World, what the true Faith is in the Queſtion controverted; for this will be done by an Infallible Authority, and a General Council can have no more. Nay, if the Pope has the ſame Liberty to follow the leſſer part of a Dioceſan Synod, that he has in General Synods, I ſhould think his own Biſhops might even have tarried at home too, and the Pope have done the Buſineſs of Councils by himſelf, without either General or Particular Councils. For, if what theſe Men ſay be true, he could do it as *ſubſtantially*: And the only Reaſon I can think of, why Biſhops muſt be put to the Charge and Trouble of meeting together, is, That he could not do it as *plauſibly* to the Eye of the World,

De Conc. Auct. lib. 2. c. 5.

withour a Council, as with it. Theſe men may talk as long as they will of the Infallibility of General Councils, but they that will uſe their eyes, cannot but ſee, that according to their Principles, Councils are called together for *Show* and *Pageantry*; but when all is done, the *Fulneſs of Power and Authority* is in the Biſhop of *Rome*.

We hear very great Boaſts of the Unity of the *Roman* Communion, cauſed by an unanimous Submiſſion to the Authority of General Councils; But any man may ſee that this is but a *ſham* pretence, who for inſtance, meets with one Chapter in *Bellarmin*, concerning *General Councils that are rejected*, and another of *General Councils partly approved, and partly diſapproved*; and at laſt, the Reaſon of approving or diſapproving, to be the Popes *confirming* or *not confirming*. For ſurely, with theſe men, General Councils cannot be the Infallible means of ending or preventing Controverſies; ſince, when they have done their Work, there muſt be another Rule uſed to know whether they are to be *received* or *rejected*; and if *received*, whether in *whole*, or in *part* only.

De Conc. l. 1. c. 6, 7.

Lib. 2. c. 2.

It were ſomething indeed, if they were agreed among themſelves, in the *Roman* Communion, by what Rule to receive or reject Councils. But upon this Queſtion, there is, and long has been as notorious a difference as any is amongſt Chriſtians; and as I ſhall ſhew, before I have done, Popes and Councils have been directly contrary to one another about it. At preſent, it will be enough to obſerve, that with the *Court*-party of *Rome*, the true marks of a General Council, which is to ſignifie any thing, are theſe; That the Pope muſt *call* it, That the Pope muſt *preſide* in it Perſonally, or by his Legates; And that the Pope muſt *confirm* it; that is to ſay, That the Pope muſt govern in it, from one end to the another. By which Rule

Rule 'tis wiſely provided, That General Councils ſhall never be able to do any thing for the good of the Catholick Church, if it does not agree with the intereſt of the Papacy; becauſe the Pope can own them or diſown them as he pleaſes; juſt as the *Grand Signior* ſerves himſelf of the *Algerines*, who are his good Allies, or his Subjects, when 'tis for his turn to call them ſo; but are left to themſelves, when that will do better.

But then there has always been a party in that Communion, as contrary to the former in this fundamental point, as Light is to Darkneſs; inaſmuch, as they make the Council to be above the Pope; Such as theſe were *Gerſon*, *Almain*, *Panormitan*, &c. and generally the *Gallican* Clergy; Theſe men conſidered, that anciently Chriſtian Emperors ſummoned General Councils, and when they met, that they did their buſineſs without the Biſhop of *Rome*, if he were refractory; and condemned him no leſs than others, if he were found in Error. That as for the neceſſity of the Popes approbation of Councils, it was a thing unknown to Antiquity; witneſs the *oppoſition* that the *Roman* See made to the 28*th* Canon of the Council of *Chalcedon*; which the Fathers of that Council valued not, but gave the Pope that reſpect, which was due to ſo great a Biſhop, and went on with their Buſineſs, notwithſtanding the Expoſtulation of his Legates. And to add no more, that Pope *Honorius* for his *Monothelitiſm* was condemned by the ſixth General Council, and that the Acts of the Council were confirmed by the Emperor; all that was there done, being afterwards approved and confirmed by Pope *Leo* 2*d*, even to the Condemnation of *Honorius* himſelf.

This Side has hitherto ſubſiſted in the *Roman* Communion, by the advantage of a great deal of Truth, and by the Learning of thoſe that maintain it; but chiefly by

the Numbers that follow it, and their attributing a larger Power and Juriſdiction to the *Roman* Biſhop, than the *Reformed* do; tho they are far from making him the viſible Sovereign of the Church, as the *Courtiers* do. The other ſide, tho it has wanted neither Numbers nor Learning to countenance it, ſeems rather to have prevailed by the advantage of Greatneſs and Preferments, which are not diſpoſed of by Councils, but by Popes.

But whatever it be that ſupports in one Communion, two parties at ſo great a diſtance from one another; the Scandal of the Controverſy has obliged ſome few here and there, to take up in a middle kind of way, between them, *viz.* that no ſtreſs is to be laid on either ſide, but that it is ſufficient to believe all Definitions to be infallibly true, in which Popes and Councils have concurr'd. For Infallibility muſt be ſomewhere in the Church, and if they are ſure of it, when there is a concurence of the *Roman* Biſhops, with the majority of Suffrages in a General Council; 'tis all one to them, whether he or the Council has the greater Authority, or what ſhare, either of 'em has in the Infallibility of the Deciſion. Which way, tho it neither agrees to that Antiquity, which one party juſtly pretends for the Superiority of Councils, nor to that Novelty which the other has labour'd to eſtabliſh in favour of the Pope; I do not yet find advanced in oppoſition to the other two, but rather uſed as an expedient in Countries where *Proteſtants* and *Romaniſts* are mixed together, to avoid anſwering for that great difference which does in effect divide the Communion of the Church of *Rome*.

And therefore, to this Suppoſition, I ſhall not oppoſe the Arguments of the two Parties, but content my ſelf to ſhew, that no party in the *Roman* Church does believe all that

that has been defined by General Councils; nor can believe all, unleſs they can believe direct contradictions. In the purſuance of which Deſign, I ſhall produce ſuch Inſtances, as will not only be good againſt the beſt learned, and moſt ingenuous Party in the *Roman* Church, *viz.* the favourers of Councils; but againſt thoſe alſo that require the concurrence of the Pope to make their Authority Infallible.

Now for thoſe learned Gentlemen in the *Roman* Church, who have moſt deſervedly ſet up the Authority of General Councils above that of the Pope's, and who have demonſtrated, that the Ancient Councils gain'd no more by the Popes concurrence, nor loſt more by wanting it, than by gaining or wanting the Authority of any other *Patriarch*; it ſhould ſeem one of the eaſieſt things in the world, to ſhew, That either they did not believe the Infallibility of General Councils, or elſe that they muſt believe Contradictions: For if the Courtiers are in the right, (as ſo far they undoubtedly are) who tell us of ſome General Councils that are partly received, and partly rejected; and of others that are wholly diſapproved in the Communion of the *Roman* Church; then thoſe of the *Roman* Communion who aſſert the Rights of Councils in oppoſition to the *Papal* uſurpation, muſt acknowledg, that neither is the Authority of General Councils ſo great as to be eſteemed juſtly a Foundation of Faith, or a reaſon obliging us without farther Conſideration, to profeſs what they have defined. If General Councils cannot err, how come theſe Gentlemen to be perſwaded, that the Council of *Ariminum*, conſiſting of about 600 Biſhops, which alſo was back'd by a Synod of *Eaſtern* Biſhops at *Seleucia*, did not diſcharge the Church of all obligation to quit the belief and profeſſion of the *Son*'s being *Conſubſtantial* with the *Father*? The ſecond Coun-

Council of *Epheſus* had a general Summons, and in reſpect of the Number of Biſhops, it was as General as Councils ſometimes were, which are eſteemed ſo; and yet we all ſay they erred, with *Dioſcorus*: And many more inſtances there are of this nature, which are ready to all learned men of all ſides. But, then how can they who attribute the moſt to a General Council, make it a Judg of Controverſie, that without more ado, obliges to believe its ſentence? A Guide that is to be followed with the obedience of Faith? For if they do ſo, Why do they not acknowledge that the Church was bound to follow theſe? For againſt their Authority no exceptions can be made, (ſetting aſide ours, that they have actually erred), but ſuch as *Canus* makes; That this Council was ſummoned againſt the Popes will; And that Council was not approved by him at all; And a third but in part; which exceptions can take no place with thoſe who in good earneſt aſſert the Independence of General Councils upon the Pope.

De Auth. Con. *l.* 5. *Colon.*

But I ſhall inſiſt a little more upon an Inſtance, which if I miſtake not, will reach the Courtiers, and the Accommodators too, that contend for Infallibility in the Pope, and in the major part of the Suffrages in a General Council; I mean the *Syrmian* Council, which was not long before that of *Ariminum*, and which compoſed the Creed, that was read and owned at *Ariminum*: *Bellarmin* places this Council amongſt the General Councils, and ſays it was *partly approved*, and *partly diſapproved*: As to the former, I make no queſtion but he was in the right; And that the *Syrmian* Council could as fairly pretend to be *the moſt Supreme and Univerſal Church Authority*, as the Council of *Trent*, or any one of thoſe Councils which the *Oxford* man relies upon, for the Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation*, will I doubt not, appear to any

De Conc. *l.* 6, 7.

Diſc. concerning the Adoration of the Euchariſt, *p.* 28.

any man that ſhall impartially conſider the Caſe: But though, I queſtion not, the Council ought to be in great part diſapproved; yet why *Bellarmin* or any of his way, ſhould diſapprove all that they diſapproved in it, I cannot well underſtand.

In ſhort, the *Syrmian* Council was ſummoned by the Emperor *Conſtantius* (that I know the Courtiers regard not) but for what it determined at laſt, it had the concurrence of Pope *Liberius*, which I hope they will think of anſwering for, and which is more than all the reſt, the general ſpread of the *Arian* (or as *Epiphanius* calls it, the *Semi-Arrian*) Doctrine by that Council eſtabliſhed, was a woful Teſtimony that it was generally received: Epiph. Hær. 73.

The ſeveral Conventions of the *Syrmian* Council, *Bellarmin* ſeems not to have minded at all: *Baronius* hath adjuſted them inconſiderately: *Petavius* was the firſt man that took pains about it, to any purpoſe; and *Valeſius* hath done it at laſt, as well perhaps as 'tis poſſible to be done; but though he has ſet right the Chronology of what was done at *Syrmium* by the Biſhops that met there, yet I find no proof for what he ſuppoſes, *viz.* That there were as many Councils, as he indeed ſhews that there were Conventions, in that City; and the ſeveral meetings of the Biſhops there, though at ſo great a diſtance from one another as they were, might as well be the ſeveral Seſſions of the ſame General Council, interrupted by the troubles of the Empire, as three ſeveral Councils indicted one after another; for though Councils anciently did their buſineſs all at once, yet it ſeems to me more probable, that there was this ſingularity in the Conventions at *Syrmium*, than that the Ancient Hiſtorians ſhould be ſo groſly miſtaken, as to repreſent all that was done at *Syrmium*, to be done in one Petav. not. in Epiph. Hær. 73. Val. not. in Soc. l. 2. c. 30. in Sozom. l. 4. c. 6. c. 15.

one Council, if there were three Councils for the doing of them.

But whether the Bishops met there the second and third time by virtue of the old, or of a new Indiction, is a matter of no great moment. 'Tis plain by the whole current of affairs in the Reign of *Constantius*, that he and the Bishops that favoured *Arianism*, were vehemently bent to run down *Athanasius* by the Authority of a General Council: In the Consulship of *Sergius* and *Nigrinianus*, which was in the year 351, the *Syrmian* Council met and composed a Creed, differing in words, but agreeing in sense to the *Nicene* Creed, and deposed *Photinus* the Bishop of *Syrmium*, who had revived the *Samosatenian* blasphemy. This was very plausible, and at that time they were content to have felt their own strength, by passing a Creed in other words, that had an Orthodox Sense; but they proceeded no further, the Western Bishops, for what cause I know not, (unless the disturbances of the Empire hindred them) not being come thither; for 'tis plain from St. *Hilary*, that those Bishops of the *West*, mentioned by *Socrates*, as present at the Council of *Syrmium*, were not there at the deposition of *Photinus*.

Soz. l. 4 c. 6. Soc. l. 2. c. 29, 30. Hilar. de Syn. Soc. l. 2. c. 29.

But in the year 357, matters had been so well prepared in that interval, that the Bishops of the *East* and *West* assembled at *Syrmium*; Great care had been taken to make the Assembly as full as might be; and that venerable old Bishop *Hosius* was compelled to come thither, and by rigorous and cruel usage to subscribe that Creed there composed, which makes *the Father greater in Honour, Dignity, and Deity, than the Son.* I shall hereafter inquire why those of the Church of *Rome* that are for the Infallibility of General Councils, reject the Creed of this Convention?

Soc. l. 2. c. 31. Soz. l. 4 c. 6.

In

In the mean time, after the publiſhing of this Creed, they ſeemed to be ſenſible of their Indiſcretion in winding up the ſtring ſo high as they had done; and above a year after met again, and compoſed that other Creed which was read at *Ariminum* afterward: This Creed, tho not ſo fulſom as the other, yet excluded the *Conſubſtantiality* of the Son with the Father, which was all that the *Arians* deſired: The moſt remarkable thing done in this Convention, was the reſtitution of Pope *Liberius*, who having now been two years almoſt, a baniſhed man for the Orthodox Faith, and being grown weary of his Sufferings, ſubſcribed in his baniſhment the *Arian* Confeſſion, after the *Eaſtern* and *Weſtern* Biſhops had ſubſcribed it firſt. This appears by his two Epiſtles recited by *Baronius*, one to the *Eaſtern* Biſhops, the other to *Vincentius* Biſhop of *Capua*; in the former he conſents to the Condemnation of *Athanaſius* as Juſt; profeſſes Unity and Peace with them all; with a willing mind receives the true Catholick Faith, expounded at *Syrmium*; and deſires their Holineſſes, becauſe they ever ſee him agreeing with them in all things, that they would vouchſafe to endeavour that he may be freed from Exile, and reſtored to his See: The other is almoſt to the ſame purpoſe, and therefore I need not repeat it. But to omit at preſent the Teſtimonies of *Athanaſius* and St. *Hierom*, ſo well known in this matter, I think it may not be amiſs to take notice what St. *Hilary* has left upon record about it; he recites the words of *Liberius*, profeſſing his ſincere agreement to that Faith which had been expounded at *Syrmium*, and in reciting them, breaks off thrice to *Anathematize* him for his *Arian* perfidiouſneſs, concluding thus, *I Anathematize thee again, and this the third time, O thou Prevaricator, Liberius.*

Soc. l. 2. c. 30. Soz. l. 4. c. 6.

Baron. Annal. To. 2. An. 357. n. 43, 45.

Athan. Epiſt. ad ſolit. p. 838. Hieron. To. 1. p. 298. Baſil. Hilar. Fragm.

Thus it ſeems the ſtream ran on the *Arian* ſide; and as by Torments *Oſius* was compelled when the Council ſat the ſecond time at *Syrmium*, ſo *Liberius* finding no other remedy, ſubmitted at laſt; and it ſhould ſeem by his Epiſtle to *Urſacius*, *Valens*, and *Germinius*, that his being ſenſible that the World was againſt him, was no ſmall motive to his concurrence with the Council; for his Words are theſe, *But whoſoever ſhall depart from our Peace and Concord, which by the Will of God is eſtabliſhed through the* WHOLE WORLD, *let him know that he is ſeparated from our Communion*: Upon which *Hilary* was not able to forbear, but to the recital of thoſe words, added thoſe of his own, *I denounce Anathema to thee, with the Arians, O thou Prevaricator.* To conclude this buſineſs, Upon the compliance of *Liberius*, he was reſtored to the adminiſtration of the Papacy, in a kind of Commiſſion with *Felix*, who had been made Pope after *Liberius* was baniſhed; for though it was againſt Eccleſiaſtical Law and Cuſtom, that there ſhould be more than one Biſhop of a City, yet it ſeems the Authority of a General Council was counted ſufficient to ſuperſede it.

Id. ibid.

Soz. l. 4. c. 15.

Having thus given the beſt account I can, from Ancient Writers, of the Tranſactions of this Synod, I am now to inquire why thoſe of the Church of *Rome* do not admit the Decrees of it.

And in the firſt place it ſeems to me, that they who pretend all General Councils to be Infallible, and that the concurrence of the Pope is not neceſſary to make them ſo, cannot ſo much as avoid being concluded by the ſecond Convention, where that blaſphemous Creed was made, which we have already mentioned.

For if it be objected, That the Council repented of their ſecond Creed, and above a year after compoſed a third.

I would

I would desire to know how long a pretender to Infallibility may persist in an error, before he disproves and destroys his Title; for tho in the Debates, many notorious Errors may be offered and hotly maintained by many of the Members, without impeachment of the Infallibility of the whole Synod; yet when once they come to a setled resolution, and publish a Decree in matters of Faith, That ought always to be esteemed Sacred and Divine.

As for the *Roman* Courtiers, they I know will avoid answering for the second Creed, by pretending that *Liberius* subscribed it not; now before I have done, I make no question but to demonstrate, That if all General Councils confirmed by Popes, are Sacred and Infallible, then even these Gentlemen are to be concluded by the second Convention of the *Syrmian* Synod, and the Creed, that was made there, tho *Liberius* subscribed it not; which tho at first sight it looks like a very odd undertaking, yet I only desire the Readers patience till I come to the place that is proper for the performance; and withall he is to remember all along, that whilst I am obliging them to believe contradictions, 'tis what they ought to be ashamed of, and not I, who indeed would oblige them to lay aside those principles which cannot be held under a less penalty than of being obliged to believe Contradictions.

But in the mean time, as the Case stands at present, I cannot see how they should reasonably avoid being determined by the Third Creed, to which *Liberius* subscribed; and though this was not Blasphemous like the second, yet it was Heretical, in that the word *Substance* was rejected; concerning which very thing in the Council of *Ariminum*, St. *Hierom* thus expresses himself, *Then the word* Substance *was abolished; then the Condemnation* Dial. Adv. Luciferian.

of the Nicene *Faith was finiſhed; the whole world groaned, wondring that it was become Arian.* No wonder therefore, that he ſays too, *Liberius* overcome with the miſeries of Exile, and ſubſcribing to *Heretical pravity*, entered *Rome* as a Conqueror.

In Chron.

I know *Baronius* earneſtly endeavours to acquit *Liberius* from being a *Heretick*, tho he confeſſes, that becauſe he conſented ſo ſhamefully to *Conſtantius*, and for his Communion with Hereticks, he was utterly eſteemed baniſhed from the Communion of Catholicks, and for the ſame, altogether unfit for Epiſcopal Function; but ſurely *Athanaſius*, *Hilary*, and St. *Hierom*, knew what was Hereſie, full as well as *Baronius*, and underſtood the Hiſtory of thoſe times ſomething better than *Baronius* did.

If it be pretended that *Liberius* did only obliquely, but not directly eſtabliſh Hereſie by condemning *Athanaſius*, and communicating with *Heretieks*; the contrary is evident from what has been already produced againſt *Liberius*, from St. *Hilary*, nay even from *Baronius* himſelf, *viz.* That he ſubſcribed with a *willing mind*, as *Liberius* himſelf teſtifies, to the Faith agreed upon at *Syrmium.*

If it be objected, That *Liberius* repented the Condemnation of *Athanaſius*, and his former errors, as appears by an Epiſtle from him to *Athanaſius*, which, ſays *Baronius*, was as it were, a *Covenant of their Reconciliation.*

I anſwer, That no ſuch thing appears in that Epiſtle, which (beſides that it is no ways manifeſt, when it was written) it is of doubtful credit, as *Bellarmin* affirms, and gives very good reaſon for his Opinion. If he had repented the Condemnation of *Athanaſius*, he ſhould have endeavoured his Reſtitution, which was not effected by his means, but by the Emperor *Jovian.*

Athan. To. 2. p. 33.

And

And ſure he was deſperately gone into Hereſy, if we may believe *Anaſtatius* and *Luitprandus*, who wrote the one of them about 800, the other about 700 years ſince; inaſmuch, as he conſented that they who Apoſtatized to *Arianiſm* (or *Semiarianiſm*) ſhould be rebaptized. And if *Stephen* the firſt, did well to Excommunicate the Biſhops of *Cappadocia*, *Cilicia*, and the *Eaſtern* Regions adjoining, becauſe they in a Synod at *Iconium*, decreed that they, who having been baptized by Hereticks, were converted, ſhould be rebaptized; what ſhall we think of *Liberius*, who conſented that they, who having received Baptiſm in the Catholick Church, and afterwards Apoſtatized, ſhould be rebaptized into ſuch a *Chriſt* as the *Arians* declared? Certainly, after ſuch a fall as this, a man cannot be believed to repent, unleſs he gives very notable Teſtimonies of Repentance.

But if this pretence were true, yet I have ſhown it to be very inſufficient in the former caſe, and 'tis as inſufficient in this. But that we may never be troubled with it more, either in the caſe of a Council repenting of what it ſelf has done, or of a Pope repenting his Concurrence with a Council, or of one Pope and Council repenting (if it be ſenſe ſo to ſpeak) of what another Pope and Council has determined, I ſhall in a few words diſpatch it here; I ſay therefore, that altho Repentance is not only allowable, but commendable in a fallible Sinner, after he has ſwerved from the true Faith, yet it is ſo improper a Qualification for an infallible Judge, that it is abſolutely inconſiſtent with any juſt pretence to Infallibility: For it muſt neceſſarily ſuppoſe an Error, or the Repentance it ſelf muſt neceſſarily be one. Tho in matters of Order and Diſcipline, Councils may alter their Decrees with reſpect to a change of Times and other Circumſtances, and their Infallibility remain; yet matters of Faith are unalterable; and this

eſpecially,

eſpecially, concerning the Divinity of our B. Saviour is ſo inviolable, that it is no preſumption to ſay, That Almighty God who cannot lye, cannot alter it. And therefore, if Councils and Popes determine in this matter what they have cauſe to depart from afterwards, they do very well to change, but they do very ill to pretend to Infallibility.

So that if it will do them any Service, they may ſay, for me, that *Liberius* repented: But ſtill I muſt ſay, that his Repentance came too late to null that Authority which he had given to thoſe Acts of the *Syrmian* Synod, which had his Concurrence. Nor can any reaſon be given, why it ſhould null them any more, than that the preſent Popes Declaration ſhould have been ſufficient to do it, if *Liberius* and all his Succeſſors to the laſt Pope, had ſtood to what *Liberius* had done. And if we cannot tell whether Popes and Councils have done their Work as they ſhould have done it, and exerted their Infallibility in matters of Faith, till we are ſure that what they have done, ſhall not be undone again; then they may determine what they pleaſe, but we ſhall never know whether they have determined with Authority to oblige our Aſſent, till the day of Judgment.

Which ſince our Adverſaries will not ſay, I doubt the Authority of this Council will lay hold upon them, after *Liberius* had formally concurred with it, and was thereupon reſtor'd to the Adminiſtration of the Papacy, and as St. *Hierom* ſays, entred *Rome* as a Conqueror. And therefore, altho *Baronius* calls this Council, a *Conventicle of Satan*, as I think, it's impious Acts conſider'd, it deſerves to be called; yet, why he ſhould call a Synod of *Eaſtern* and *Weſtern* Biſhops, after a Pope had approved and ſubſcribed to their Creed; why, I ſay he ſhould call it by ſo hard a Name, is ſomething ſtrange to any one that conſiders what

what ſtreſs the *Roman*-Court-party lay upon the Papal Authority.

But if it be now objected, That the proceedings of that Council were by no means *Conciliary*, in which caſe a Council has no Authority, and all the Acts of it are void without more to do: If it be ſaid, That great Violence and Cruelty was uſed by *Conſtantius*, againſt thoſe who oppoſed the *Arian* Faction; that *Conſtantius* who was not baptized, ought not to have intermedled in the Affairs of the Church; and that the Miſeries of Baniſhment, or, as *Baronius* ſays, his Emulation to *Felix*, who uſurped his Seat, had biaſſed *Liberius*.

To this I anſwer, that if our Bleſſed Saviour's words, *I am with you always, even to the end of the World*; together with thoſe other promiſes which are uſually produced out of the Scripture in this cauſe; If, I ſay, thoſe places do infer an Univerſal, Viſible, Living and Infallible Guide, to which God will always afford ſuch effectual Aſſiſtance, as ſhall always preſerve it from all Errors, and lead it into all truth in matters of Faith, ſo that *the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it*, then that aſſiſtance ſeems more needful to preſerve and defend it from the force and fraud of the Devil, and his Inſtruments, *viz.* wicked, cruel and powerful Men (which appear moſt properly to be the Gates of Hell) than againſt the unwary and involuntary failings and infirmities of good and well minded Men. Therefore this Geneneral Council not having ſuch Aſſiſtance, proves plainly, that they were not that univerſal, viſible and infallible Guide; and if they through Fear or Ambition ſwerved ſo foully from the Truth; what ſecurity can *Chriſtians* have (if they do not examine what is defined) that any other General Council has not, or may not be as much miſled by the ſame, or other as undue Reſpects?

Beſides,

Beſides, In a General Council the majority ought to have the deciſive power of the whole, elſe doubts and diſputes may never be determined; theſe challenge alſo full Authority not only over their own Members, but all other Perſons whatſoever, and to chuſe what Means and Inſtruments, and what manner they judg moſt convenient, to reduce and compel by Perſwaſions, Anathema's, Baniſhment, Depoſition, &c. and in later Ages, by Death it ſelf, to chaſtiſe Hereticks as they pleaſe. Something of this courſe was uſed at the General Council of *Nice*, wherein the Emperor *Conſtantine*, being yet unbaptiſed, baniſhed *Arius*, and *Euſebius*, and *Theognis* Biſhops of *Nicomedia* and *Nicæa*, as *Socrates*, *Sozomen*, and *Theodoret* teſtifie.

Photinus was condemned, and ejected from the Biſhoprick of *Sirmium*, and baniſhed in the Council there.

Bin. Tom. 2. pag. 517. By virtue of the ſame Authoriry, the 2*d* General Council at *Conſtantinople* Anathematiſed *Theodorus* Biſhop of *Mopſveſtia*, the Writings of *Theodoret* Biſhop of *Cyrus*, and an Epiſtle of *Ibas*; in which *Anathema's*, they alſo involved *Vigilius* the Pope, in ſuch manner as I ſhall declare. The Council being aſſembled to conſider of the three former points, which were called the *Tria Capitula*, or three Chapters: The Pope and Council not well agreeing concerning the Determination of them, the Pope, tho at that time in the ſame City, and in the firſt and ſecond Seſſions, earneſtly invited by the Council to joyn with them, or ſend his Legates to preſide therein, refuſed to come. To him adhered ſeventeen *Weſtern* Biſhops, an Arch-Deacon, and two Deacons of *Rome*; and declining the Council, they together with him, made a kind of ſeparate Synod, and the Council acted without them.

Notwithſtanding *Vigilius*, according to his promiſe to the Emperor *Juſtinian*, ſent to him and the Council, and publiſhed

publiſhed to all the Catholick World, his Decree or Conſtitution, concerning the matters in queſtion, ſigned by himſelf, and thoſe twenty that joined with him. In that Decree he gives reaſons why he defends the three Chapters, why he dares not condemn them himſelf, and why he forbids others to condemn them. In the end of it, he ſays, We *Ordain and Decree, that it is not lawful for any belonging to Eccleſiaſtical Orders or Dignities, to Write, Utter, Compoſe, Teach or Move any further Queſtion, after this our preſent Decree, concerning the often mentioned three Chapters; but if any thing is, or ſhall be done, ſaid or written, concerning theſe three Chapters, againſt thoſe things which we have here aſſerted, or ordained, in the Name of any one whomſoever, appertaining to Eccleſiaſtical Orders or Dignities, this we every way reject by Authority of the Apoſtolick See, over which by the Grace of God we preſide.*

Bar. Ann. an. 553. Num. 47. Numb. 208.

Notwithſtanding this ſolemn Decree, which was publiſhed, during their fifth Seſſion, the Council having read and examined the matters in queſtion, and alſo the ſeveral Acts of the Council of *Chalcedon*, concerning the Epiſtle of *Ibas*, did as ſolemnly Anathematiſe the ſaid three Chapters, and all thoſe that defended them, and all thoſe who would not accurſe them, and declared all ſuch to be Hereticks, in their ſixth and eighth Seſſions.

Bar. An. 553. Num. 47.

Theſe Sentences *Baronius* acknowledges were decreed directly againſt the Conſtitution of *Vigilius*. Num. 214.

I have not here ſet down the Reaſons offer'd by *Vigilius*, againſt the Condemnation of the three Chapters, nor the Sentences of the Council at large, becauſe they are very long, and would too much interrupt my preſent purpoſe, which is only to ſhew how General Councils exerciſed the Power which they challenged, and

how their Acts were approved, and that this Council intended to pronounce *Vigilius* an Heretick, and Anathematiſe him as much, as if they had named him, which moſt plainly appears, in that they taking notice of the Reaſons and Aſſertions he offer'd in his Conſtitution, do confute and diſallow them, and finally decreed, as has been declared.

If it be asked how this Council was approved. It ſeems doubtful, whether or no *Vigilius* ever approved it. If he did, then he approved the Sentence againſt himſelf; but the Teſtimonies of *Evagrius* and *Nicephorus* brought for that purpoſe, appear rather to relate to *Vigilius* his Epiſtle (in anſwer to one of *Eutichius*) wherein he approves that the three Chapters ſhall be debated, and promiſes to confer with them about them. But *Gregory* the Great approved this Synod, who having ſpoken of the four firſt General Councils, ſays, *In like manner, I reverence the fifth Synod, wherein the Epiſtle of* Ibas, *as it is called, full of Errors, is condemned.* I need no more Teſtimonies, becauſe neither *Baronius* nor *Binius* diſallow its Authority.

Con. Tom. 2. p. 521. *a. b.*

Lib. 1. Epiſt. 24. Ant. 1615.

By Virtue of this Power, *Paſchal* the 2*d* delivered to perpetual *Anathema* the Emperor *Henry* the 4*th*, by the Judgment of the whole Church, as he affirmed, which encouraged his unnatural Son to Rebel againſt him, and occaſioned Wars betwixt them, wherein the Father dying, his Body was digged out of the Grave, which his Son ſuffered to remain five years unburied.

Urſpergenſ. Abba Chron. p. 241, &c. Baſil. 1569.

By the ſame unbounded Authority the fourth General Council at the *Lateran* under *Innocent* the third, preſumed to diſpoſe of Kings and Princes Dominions, warning temporal Lords to purge their Dominions of Hereſy upon pain of Excommunication, abſolving their Subjects from their Fidelity, and expoſing their Lands to the Invaſion of

Bin. tom. 3. par. 2. p. 1451. *b.*

of Catholicks. This Power indeed, before and ſince, has been exerciſed upon many other Accounts than Hereſy, ſeveral of which are obſerved by our late Learned King *James* the firſt, in his Remonſtrance for the right of Kings.

There are indeed few Councils, wherein ſome have not ſmarted under this exorbitant Power; and to ſum up all at once, the General Council at *Conſtance*, claimed to derive their Power immediately from *Chriſt*, to which all States and Dignities, even the Papal, ought to ſubmit in matters of Faith, upon pain of condign puniſhment, to be executed upon them, even by having recourſe to other aids of Law, (by which, I ſuppoſe is meant the ſecular Power) if they repented not, and need ſo required; which Power they ſoon after exerciſed upon Pope *John* the 21 or 23, as ſome ſtile him, whom in their twelfth Seſſion they depoſed, which Sentence he the ſame Seſſion confirmed. Bin. tom. 3. par. 2. p. 1501. a.

This Power obliged *Sigiſmund* King of the *Romans*, to break his Faith with *John Huſs*, and to deliver him over to the will of the Council, contrary to his Faith, and ſafe Conduct given to the ſaid *John Huſs* for his ſafe paſſage to the Council, and his return. The Council declaring that *no ſafe Conduct given to a Heretick, under what Covenant ſoever, by any Emperor, Kings, or other ſecular Princes, ought to exempt the ſaid Heretick from the Judgment of his competent Eccleſiaſtical Judg, who may puniſh him, tho he come to the place of Judgment, confiding in that ſafe Conduct, without which he would not have come.* Accordingly, the Kings breach of Faith, coſt *John Huſs* his Life, who was condemned in the 12 Seſſion, and burned for Hereſy, during the fifteenth Seſſion of that General Council. Seſſ. 19.

Of the Approbation of the abovementioned celebrated *Lateran* Council, conſiſting of four hundred Biſhops, and eight hundred other Fathers, *&c.* as *Binius* ſays, I ſhall

need ſay nothing, it being owned by the Council of *Trent*. But, how that at *Conſtance* was approved, I ſhall declare when I come to ſpeak more particularly of the Acts thereof.

In the mean time, I think I have evidently demonſtrated, that force was not firſt practiſed at *Milan* or *Sirmium*, and that it ended not there; but that the Authority challenged by General Councils, is as unbounded as the World; no Power on Earth can ſtand before it, the natural duty of Children towards their Parents, the Oaths and Allegiance of Subjects to their lawful Princes, tho in other caſes moſt ſacred, and the Faith of Princes to their Subjects muſt yield to it, and when they ſtand in the way of it, are no more binding than *Sampſons* Cords; and to that end Princes, Children or Subjects, muſt become the Inſtruments of General Councils to be imployed by them according as they ſhall have occaſion to make uſe of them.

So the Council at *Nice* made uſe of *Conſtantine* to eſtabliſh the true Faith; and ſo the *Arians* in the Councils at *Milan* and *Sirmium*, made uſe of *Conſtantius* to deſtroy it. For that he was their Inſtrument, and not they his, will I think ſufficiently appear by undoubted Teſtimony.

I will begin with *Athanaſius*, whoſe unjuſt Perſcution by *Conſtantius* will, if nothing elſe would, free him from all Suſpition of partiality towards him.

Tom. 1. p. 288. They, ſays he, (ſpeaking of the *Arians*) contrary to the mind of King *Conſtantius*, who was moſt pious and courteous, publiſhed and acted what they pleaſed: And again, ſpeaking how he was enſlaved to the impie-
Tom. 1. p. 857. ty of thoſe about him: *Conſtantius*, ſays he, being ſuch a perſon, one ſhould rather commiſerate him, who under the appearance of freedom, was a ſervant to thoſe who drew him according to their impious pleaſure. *Gre-*

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gory Nazianzen alſo, a Champion of unſhaken Fidelity, during the dangerous Reigns of *Conſtantius* and *Julian*, in his ſecond Oration againſt *Julian*, excuſes *Conſtantius*, ſaying, That if he ſeemed to ſwerve from the true Faith, that crime was to be imputed to the folly and pravity of thoſe in power, who poſſeſſing his ſimple, weak in Piety, and not-far-diſcerning mind, led it at their will, and upon pretence of Sincerity, effected their malicious Zeal. Par. 1638.

Epiphanius, a Father of the Church at that time, of whom St. *Auguſtin* ſays that he was praiſed for his ſoundneſs in the Orthodox Faith, gives this Character of *Conſtantius*, That he who otherwiſe was in many reſpects good and pious, in this alone erred, That he walked not in the Faith of his Father, which thing was not by his fault, but the fraud of ſome, who muſt give an account at the day of Judgment. Adver. Hereſ. To. 2. p. 737. Par. 1622.

If it be objected, That force is lawful in a General Council to eſtabliſh the true Faith, but not to ſupport Hereſie; I anſwer, that this is ſo improper an Objection to be made by a *Romaniſt*, that (did I not know the dexterity of ſome to pervert reaſon, through the falſe light they ſhew it by), I ſhould not mention it, leſt any one ſhould think that I only chuſe ſuch as I can eaſily anſwer; becauſe if it be a good one, it can only ſerve to overthrow the Infallibility; for all General Councils, having the ſame unqueſtionable Authority in Definitions of Faith, and Interpretation of Scriptures, for any one to judg that any ſuch General Council decrees Hereſie, is to take the power of defining the true Faith, and interpreting Scriptures, out of their hands, to whom only, ſay they, it belongs; and transfer it to private Perſons. If another General Council has condemned this, and defined the contrary, one of them muſt

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neceſſarily ſuppoſed to have erred in matter of Faith, and conſequently not infallible; and it muſt be left to the judgment of private perſons, which of them made the true Definition, and interpreted Scriptures aright.

This the Author of the *Papiſt Miſrepreſented and Repreſented*, ſeems to allow, when he ſays, That *the Faith of his Church can receive no additions; and that he is obliged to believe nothing, beſides what Chriſt taught and his Apoſtles; and if any thing contrary to this ſhould be defined, and commanded to be believed, even by ten thouſand Councils, he believes it damnable in any one to receive it.*

This is ſo large a grant, that it abſolutely overthrows their Infallibility; for the Doctrine of *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles* being all contained in the Scriptures, for a private Perſon, as that Author is, to judg of that, is to make himſelf an Interpreter of the Scriptures; and for him to judg what are additions of the Faith of his Church, is to take away ſuch a part of the Infallibility, as that he may, whenever he pleaſes, take away the reſt, by ſaying that any Definition of Faith declared by any General Council, is an addition thereto. But the Author thought fit to revoke this Grant by an Explanation, being, it may be, aware of theſe dangerous conſequences; howſoever he cannot thereby avoid others as bad; for if the affirmation of any General Synod, that it delivers only the ancient Faith according to the Scriptures, be a ſufficient reaſon for Chriſtians to receive its Decrees, why ſhould not the Creed at *Sirmium*, of which we have ſpoken, be allowed? For the Biſhops there did not pretend to make any additions to the Faith therein, but alledged the Scripture for its Authority: If their own affirmation only is not ſufficient, then why ſhould the

the Proteſtants be obliged to receive many Definitions, (which they judg additions) of Faith in the Council of *Trent*? For certainly that had the form and appearance of a General Council more than this; it had the concurrence of Pope *Liberius*, as has been already proved; it was aſſembled by the Emperor *Conſtantius*, who had a larger ſhare of *Chriſtendom* than all the Princes who conſented to this, and had a greater number of Biſhops than this when it was fulleſt.

Pietro Soave Polano, a Father of incomparable Learning, great Judgment, and integrity, of the *Roman* Communion, and beſides cotemporary with the *Tridentine* Synod, teſtifies, That *Laynez* the Jeſuit, (declaring in one of their Congregaions, that it was not the number of Biſhops, which may all err, but the Popes confirmation, that can give authority to a General Council and its Decrees) affirmed, That in this Council under *Paul* the Third, principal Articles were defined concerning Canonical Books, Interpretations, parity of Traditions with the Scriptures, by a number of five, or a leſs, *&c.* Hiſtory Coun. of *Trent*, p. 613.

Binius reckons but two Cardinals, about five and forty Arch-biſhops and Biſhops, and four Abbats, and Generals, that were preſent in their thirteenth Seſſion, wherein the Real Preſence, *viz.* Deity and Humanity of our Bleſſed Saviour, was concluded to be contained under the Species of the Elements in the Euchariſt, the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation; and that the ſame Adoration which is due to the true God, ought to be paid to the Sacrament, with ſeveral other Doctrines, and *Anathema's* to the Contradictors of them, were decreed. The whole number, at their Diſſolution, (together with the Ambaſſadors, Cardinals, Patriarchs, Arch-Biſhops, Biſhops, Abbats, Proctors of the Abſent, and Generals of Orders, were in all but two hundred and fifty, as *Binius*

Binius ſays, which was ſhort of the number of Biſhops only in divers Councils that are rejected.

And as for their practices; if that at *Sirmium* deſerved to be called a *Conventicle of Satan*, he that conſiders the Arts, ſecret policies and contrivances uſed by the Popes, Princes, and Prelates, to circumvent, and over-reach one another, in the Council of *Trent*, can ſurely never think it ought to be ſtiled a holy Synod, aſſiſted by the Holy Ghoſt.

When it was carried by the majority in the Congregation, That Reſidency was by Divine Inſtitution, upon the Legates ſending to know the Popes pleaſure, before they would make a Decree therein, they who were for ſuch Reſidency, grievouſly complained, and ſaid, That the Synod of *Trent* was guided by the Holy Ghoſt, ſent thither from time to time in a Cloak-bag from *Rome*; The Prelates of that party likewiſe complained of the Pope and Court, That he held the Council in ſervitude, which ought to be free; That there were ſuch limitations and corrections, that they cannot truly be called a Council; That there were in the Council more than forty Stipendaries of the Pope, ſome receiving thirty, ſome forty Crowns a Month, and others were terrified by Letters from Cardinals and other Courtiers.

Soav. Polano, Pa. 496. Pa. 507, &c.

The Pope on the other hand, accuſed the Council, ſaying, That it is plain, that the Prelates went to *Trent* with Commiſſion from their Princes, according to which they proceed; That the Ambaſſadors by Letters and Perſwaſions, do compel them to follow the intereſt of their Maſters; and yet for all this, no man ſayeth, which ſhould be ſaid, That the Council is not free.

Pa. 503.

It evidently appears, through the whole management, That they too juſtly accuſed each other of indirect proceeding; for when the Pope heard that forty of the *French* Prelates were expected in the Council, who he

he thought would be againſt his intereſts, he diſpatched away to the Council all the Biſhops remaining in *Rome*, loading them with promiſes, and giving money to thoſe which were poor, to encreaſe the number of his Party againſt the time that *Reſidence* ſhould be debated; and to ſecure the *French*, he offered King *Charles* the ninth, to give him an hundred thouſand Crowns, and lend him as much more, that nothing in the Council ſhould be handled againſt his Authority, *&c.* which ſhewed that he truſted as much in his *Money*, as in the *Holy-Ghoſt*, to ſecure it. That the Prelates that oppoſed him were guided by the Commands of their Princes, is ſufficiently evident. But to ſet down the Tranſactions of this nature on each Side, would be little leſs labour than to tranſcribe a whole Hiſtory, which alſo is ſufficiently known; and therefore I ſhall only add the ground of their Difference; which was this, That the *German*, *Spaniſh*, and *French* Prelates maintained that Epiſcopacy and Reſidence were of Divine Inſtitution.

Which Doctrine the late Popes very much dreaded, becauſe they believed it would make way to advance the Authority of Councils above that of Popes, (according to the Decrees of the General Councils of *Conſtance* and *Baſil*, to which the *French* did much adhere) and not a little diminiſh their power over Biſhops out of Council.

So that upon the whole matter, I can ſee no reaſon why the Acts of *Liberius*, and the Council at *Sirmium*, ſhould not have as much authority with thoſe who hold Infallibility, as the Decrees at *Trent*.

But now having thus ſhewn that the *Syrmian* Council, ſo far as *Liberius* conſented to it, muſt lay hold upon the *Romaniſts*, I proceed to ſhew, That their ſecond Creed, to which it does not appear that *Liberius* ſub-

ſcribed, ought yet, according to the received principles of the *Roman* Church, to be admitted.

For ſuppoſe it wanted that which ſome would have to be the eſſential Sanction, the Confirmation of the Pope; if this be a ſufficient cauſe to reject it, I would know, Whether the ſecond General Council of *Conſtantinople* was to be rejected, when it had determined againſt the Decree of Pope *Vigilius*, pronounced him a *Heretick*, and accurſed him, as we have ſhewn before? Pope *Gregory* indeed did at length approve it; But I would fain know what was to have been thought of it before; but upon this and many other ſuch inſtances, I am content to lay no great ſtreſs, becauſe 'tis ſomething plain to me, that I can produce the Authority of General Councils confirmed by Popes, obliging the Church, and the Pope himſelf to ſubmit to General Councils. 'Tis true, there is the ſame Authority of Popes and Councils, the quite contrary way; but that does but help to carry on my Argument the better; for the more contradictions there are between Councils, that ariſe in the purſuance of this Enquiry, the more evidently it will appear, that 'tis impoſſible their definitions ſhould be a Rule of Faith.

For this matter therefore I appeal to the Decrees of the General Councils of *Conſtance* and *Baſil*, who challenge their power to be derived immediately from *Chriſt*, and which every one of whatſoever State and Dignity, even the Papal, ought to obey in matters of Faith, *&c.* They alſo declare, that whoſoever, of what Dignity or Quality ſoever, even the Papal, which ſhall contumaciouſly refuſe to obey this or any other General Council legitimately called, upon the premiſes, ſhall be ſubject to due penance, *&c.*

Now

Now if it be the Popes duty to obey the Decrees of General Councils in matters of Faith, then (though his conſent is deſirable, as is alſo the unanimous concurrence of every particular Member thereof, becauſe the perfect Harmony of the Parts adds no ſmall Luſtre to the beauty of Chriſts Church) it no more follows that the Council can determine nothing without him, than it does that they can act nothing without an univerſal Conſent; for it would be moſt abſurd to think that our Bleſſed Saviour ſhould give Athority to General Councils to determine every thing in matters of Faith, and yet it ſhould be in the power of one man, who ought to obey, to hinder them from determining any thing therein. If therefore I ſhall fully prove, That the Councils of *Conſtance* and *Baſil* were lawfully aſſembled, and that their Decrees had ſuch Approbation and Confirmation, as was ever counted ſufficient to make the Decrees of any General Council of unqueſtionable Anthority in the *Romiſh* Church; then I hope it muſt be undeniably granted, that either the Decrees of the Synod at *Syrmium* ought to be undoubtedly received by that Church, though they had not the Popes Confirmation; or that if that Church does not receive thoſe Decrees, the Church of *England* may with as good reaſon reject the Decrees of the Council of *Trent*, or any other General Council, if they do not find them warranted by Scripture, notwithſtanding any pretence of Infallibility, which (though there were no other proof), will by this alone appear vain and groundleſs.

I will therefore forbear to examine any other more ancient Councils, but begin to enquire into thoſe at *Conſtance* and *Baſil*, and how their Decrees were confirmed; I ſhall only firſt make a ſhort Narrative of the cauſe for which the Council of *Conſtance* was aſſembled.

The *Roman* Church having been many years rent and distracted by the Schisms of several pretenders to the Papacy, (whose Titles it is needless here to recount), who, severally, in all places under their Obedience, continued to create Cardinals, Priests, and Deacons, and to exercise Papal Jurisdiction, notwithstanding the interposition, and great endeavours of many Princes and Cardinals, to compose the Schism so shamefully scandalous to their Church; Upon the death of *Alexander* the Fifth, one of the Pretenders, the Cardinals at *Rome* chose *John* the 23*d*, who by the Exhortation of the Emperor, assembled this Council at *Constance*, to compose this Schism of six and thirty years continuance.

Bin. To. 3. part 2. *p.* 1555.

The Council in the fifth Session does declare, *That being a General Council, lawfully congregated in the Holy Ghost, and representing the Catholick Church, it has Power immediately from Christ, to which every one, of whatsoever State and Dignity, even the Papal, is obliged to obey in things appertaining to Faith, and extirpation of the said Schism, and reformation of the said Church in its Head and Members.*

Also it declares, *That every Person (of whatsoever Condition, State, or Dignity, tho it be the Papal) who shall contumaciously refuse to obey the Mandates, Statutes, or Ordinations, or Precepts of this sacred Synod, and of every other General Council, legitimately called, upon the Premises or matters thereto belonging, done or to be done) except he repent, shall be subject to condign Penance, and shall be duly punished, even by having recourse, if there be need, to other Aids of Law.*

The Council made several other Decrees to limit the Papal Power, and objected many hainous Crimes against this present Pope *John*, whereupon he fearing they might determine severely against him, fled in disguise, first to *Schaphusa*, and after to *Friburg*. Then

Then the Council enquired into the cauſe of his flight, and choſe certain Judges, grave and very learned Men, who ſhould diſcuſs the Crimes objected againſt him, and relate them in order to the Council. There were above forty Articles proved againſt him, many of which were of the fouleſt nature imaginable, *viz.* that affecting the Papacy, he contrived to poyſon his Predeceſſor *Alexander* the fifth, and his Phyſitian. That he committed Adultery with his Brother's Wife, and other married Women. That he defloured holy Nuns and Virgins, and committed other Crimes of Incontinency, for which, and becauſe he appeared not upon ſeveral Proclamations, he was in the Tenth Seſſion ſuſpended from all Papal Juriſdiction and Adminiſtration.

Afterwards he was by the diligence of the Council taken and impriſoned near *Conſtance*. Then the Council deputed certain Biſhops, and others, with ſufficient Witneſs to ſhew him the Articles, and to demand of him if he would, either by confeſſing or denying them, make any defence, or offer any Allegation or Oppoſition to the Proceſs againſt him.

Which thing they performed accordingly. But he anſwered, that he would not make or offer any; but would in all things conform himſelf to the Determination of the ſacred Council; and moreover did conſent to all manner of Proceſs made by the ſame Council againſt him, aſſerting that he would make no other anſwer to the foreſaid Articles; affirming that the Council of *Conſtance* was moſt holy, and *could not err*. Then one of the Deputies offered him a Copy of the Articles, to the end that if he would, he might object againſt them, or any of them; to which he anſwered again, that he would ſubmit himſelf to the Council, *which he knew could not err*. Then one of the Deputies added, Holy Father, we have

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moreover Commiſſion to aſſign you a time, when the Council will pronounce a definitive Sentence againſt you (upon all and ſingular the Crimes, for which the Council has proceeded againſt you) as the Nature and Quality thereof ſhall require; therefore we appoint you to morrow to hear the definitive Sentence.

But *John*, as it ſeemed, not deſiring to appear, anſwered, *I am very well pleaſed with the Sentence, and as much as in me lies, confirm and approve it; and likewiſe I confirm, approve, and ratifie all the Proceſs, and whatſoever has been acted againſt me in the Council, and I promiſe that I will never hereafter contradict the ſame.*

Then the Deputies returned, and made Relation of theſe things to the Council, who thereupon proceeded to pronounce a definitive Sentence againſt him, and for his departure from the Council, and his deteſtable, wicked, and incorrigible manner of Life, both before his Promotion to the Papacy, and afterwards, notoriouſly Scandalizing the Church, and all good Chriſtians; they depoſed him. Which Sentence being ſhewed him the next day but one, by the Deputies appointed by the Council, he in moſt ample manner confirmed.

Soon after this, the Cardinal *Raguſinus* and *Carolus de Malateſtis*, came with full Power and Authority, to them and others directed, from *Gregory* the twelfth, another pretender to the Papacy, (who, tho formerly depoſed by the Council at *Piſa*, continued to exerciſe Papal Juriſdiction in places under his Obedience) in his Name to convoke, authoriſe and confirm the Council, and to renounce the Papacy; Provided *Balſhaſar*, calling himſelf *John* the 23*d*, was not preſent, nor preſided therein. The ſubſtance of which Confirmation, &c. was contained in a Bull, dated the 3*d* of *March*, A. D. 1415.

Another

Another Bull was directed to *Charles Malateſta*, of the ſame date, giving more particularly to him, full Authority to Act in his Name, as he ſhould ſee cauſe, and confirming all his Proceedings, tho they ſhould exceed his Commiſſion, and preſent Inſtructions.

Theſe two Bulls being read in the Council, *Malateſta* aſſigned over his Powers of authoriſing and approving the Council to Cardinal *Raguſinus*, who thereupon did convoke that ſacred General Council, and did authoriſe all things to be acted by it; which Convocation, Authorization and Confirmation, was for Unities ſake, allowed by the Council.

In their fortieth Seſſion, they reſolved on the manner of electing a new Pope; and the next Seſſion, Cardinal *Odo*; or *Otho de Columna*, according to the ſame form, was elected by the Name of *Martin* the fifth.

In *April* following, the Council was diſſolved, at which Diſſolution, *Martin* declared, That *all and ſingular the Acts determined, concluded and decreed in matters of Faith, by the preſent Council, he would Synodically hold, and inviolably obſerve, and never contradict them in any manner; and the ſame ſo Synodically acted, he did approve and ratifie, and not otherwiſe, nor in any other manner.* And this he ordered to be repeated, and required pubblick Inſtruments to be made by the *Protonotaries* and *Notaries*, deputed to write the Acts of the Council.

Here we ſee the Decrees of this Council confirmed firſt by *John* the three and twentith, ſubmitting and conforming himſelf to the Council, and declaring that it *was moſt Holy, and could not Err.* Then they were confirmed by *Gregory* the twelfth, as has been ſhewed; and laſtly, by *Martin* the fifth, who for a further Confirmation thereof, writing to the Arch-Biſhops, Biſhops, and the Inquiſitors

Inquiſitors of Hereſy, amongſt other Directions to find out Hereticks, and try ſuch as were ſuſpected of Hereſy; and to the end that none might continue in Ignorance, or cunningly pretend it; He by Approbation of the ſacred Council, ſent the Articles againſt *John Wickliff* and *John Huſs*, with Interogatories fitted to the ſame, whereto every ſuſpected Perſon ſhould anſwer upon Oath. Amongſt which Interrogatories, were, *Whether he did believe, hold and aſſert, that every General Council, and alſo that at* Conſtance, *did repreſent the Univerſal Church? Alſo, whether he believed that that which the ſacred Council of* Conſtance, *repreſenting the Univeſal Church, does approve in favour of the Faith, for the Salvation of Souls, the ſame ought to be approved, and held by all Chriſts faithful People; and that what it did, and does condemn, as contrary to Faith and good Manners, ought by the ſame faithful People, to be held and believed, as condemned?*

Bin. Tom. 3. part. 2. p 1655.

Thus the Decrees were confirmed by all the Pretenders, except *Peter de Luna*, called by thoſe under his obedience, *Benedict* the eleventh or thirteenth, as ſome ſay; but he was Schiſmatically elected, and not reckoned amongſt the Legitimate Popes, by either *Platina*, *Onuphrius* or *Binius*; he was depoſed, firſt in a Council at *Piſa*, and afterwards in the thirty ſeventh Seſſion of this Council, as Perjured, Schiſmatical, and a Heretick. He had only two Cardinals that adhered to him to the laſt, who when he died, did by the Inſtigation of *Alphonſus* King of *Arragon* create *Egidius Munionis* Pope, and called him *Clement* the 8*th*, who preſently created Cardinals, and exerciſed other Acts of Papal Authority. But four years after, *Alphonſus* being reconciled to *Martin*, *Egidius*, at the command of *Alphonſus*, diveſted himſelf of the Papacy, and was made Biſhop of *Majorica* by *Martin*, which put an end to that Schiſm of fifty years continuance.

This

This Council, in the Nine and thirtieth Seſſion, decreed, that the firſt General Council after that, ſhould be celebrated within five years after the diſſolution of the Synod at *Conſtance*; the ſecond within ſeven years after the diſſolution of the firſt; and, after the diſſolution of the ſecond, from ten years to ten years General Councils ſhould be perpetually celebrated. The Pope, a Month before the diſſolution of every General Council, was, with the approbation of the Council, to appoint the place where the next ſhould be held; which thing, if the Pope neglected to do, the Council was to aſſign the place. Theſe times the Pope, by advice of the Cardinals, might abbreviate, but in no wiſe prorogue. With the conſent, and ſubſcription of two parts of his Cardinals, the Pope might alſo, for urgent reaſons, change the place appointed: but the abbreviation of time, and alteration of place, the Pope was obliged to publiſh a Year before the time formerly prefixed. According to this Decree, *Martin*, in the Four and fortieth Seſſion, with the conſent of the Council, appointed *Pavia* to be the place where the next Council ſhould be celebrated, which was aſſembled by *Martin*, and was tranſlated to *Siena*, and there the City of *Baſil* was appointed to be the place, where, after ſeven years, the next General Council ſhould be held.

When that time drew near, *Martin*, being indiſpoſed, through age and infirmities, conſtituted Cardinal *Julian* to be his Legate *de latere*, to preſide in the ſaid Council, but died ſoon after.

Eugenius the Fourth, formerly called *Gabriel Condelmerius* ſucceeded him. He alſo appointed Cardinal *Julian* to preſide in that Council, who accordingly began it with all the accuſtomed Forms and Ceremonies.

In their ſecond Seſſion, that Council made and confirmed the two formerly mention'd Decrees of the fifth Seſſion of the Council of *Conſtance*, ſubjecting the Pope to the General Councils in Matters of Faith, &c. and moreover declared and decreed, that being legitimately congregated for the extirpation of Hereſie, and for the general reformation of the Manners of the Church in its Head and its Members, it ought not, without its own conſent, be diſſolved, or transferred to another place, or prorogued to another time, by any authority, no not the Papal. And that no authority whatſoever, no not the Papal, ought to hinder any perſon from coming to the Council, or withdraw or recall any one of the Council from the ſame. And that no perſon engaged to be of the Council, ſhould depart without the licenſe of Deputies, appointed to examine the reaſons of ſuch as deſired leave to withdraw; and thoſe, ſo departing, ſhould leave their powers with others which ſtayed. Upon which Decrees, *Eugenius* recalled *Julian* his Legate, and diſſolved the Council, who thereupon, in the third Seſſion, ſent Orators to him, to entreat and require him to revoke the ſaid diſſolution: but the Council not receiving a ſatisfactory anſwer, declared, that that diſſolution was contrary to the Decrees of the Council of *Conſtance*, tended to the overthrow of the Faith, the ſcandal of Chriſtianity, and was void. Then repeating the firſt Decree of the fifth Seſſion of the Council of *Conſtance*, declaring the Pope ſubject to General Councils in matters of Faith, they ſent a Monition againſt *Eugenius*, and the Cardinals with him, wherein firſt repeating the ſecond Decree of the fifth Seſſion of *Conſtance*, declaring

Though *Binius* in his Notes on this Council, ſays, that *Eugenius* recalled his Legate, who thereupon left the Council, yet it appears in the 13th Seſſion, when *Eugenius* was, after many Monitions accuſed of Contumacy by the Promoters of the Council, that then *Julian* was perſonally there, and ſate and acted there as Legate of the Apoſtolic See, and Preſident of the Council.

Pius the Second ſays, that he forſook the Council, and after returned, but at laſt wholly forſook, and went over to *Eug.*

To. 4. *Bi. p.* 514.

Bin. To. 4. *p.* 22.

ring the Pope ſubject to condign puniſhment, if he diſobeyed any General Council in Matters of Faith, &c. they, with all reverence and earneſtneſs, beſeech, require, and warn the Pope, to revoke the pretended diſſolution in as publick a manner as he had publiſhed it, and that he would not onely wholly deſiſt from any ways obſtructing the ſaid Council, but further and aſſiſt the ſame, and perſonally appear there in three Months, or, if neceſſarily hindred, that he would depute one, or more, with full power to confirm whatſoever ſhould be tranſacted in the ſaid Council. If he neglected to perform theſe things, then the Council will provide for the neceſſities of the Church, and proceed accordingly as by Divine and Humane Laws they are obliged. The Council beſeeches, admoniſhes, and requires, the Cardinals to attend and aſſiſt the ſame, otherwiſe they will proceed againſt them in ſuch manner as the neceſſity of the Church and Divine and Humane Laws ſhall require.

In ſeveral other Seſſions they aſſert their Authority to continue, and declare the Pope's power void, either to diſſolve, or prorogue that, without their conſent, or erect another General Council whileſt that was ſitting. *Eugenius* is accuſed of Contumacy by the Promoters of the Council in the tenth Seſſion, in the eleventh it is, amongſt ſeveral things, declared, that if the Pope continues his endeavours in any manner to impede, change, prorogue, or diſſolve the Council, and ſhall not repent, and make real ſatisfaction within four Months, he ſhall forthwith be ſuſpended from adminiſtration of the Papal Dignity, which adminiſtration ſhall devolve to the Council, and if he perſiſt in his obſtinacy two Months after the foreſaid four Months, then the Council will proceed to deprive

him totally. The Council alſo decreed, that it ſhould not be in the power of any, no not the Pope, to diſſolve, or tranſlate the ſaid Council from place to place, without the conſent of two parts of the ſame declared in open Seſſion.

In the twelfth Seſſion the Council decrees a Citation againſt *Eugenius*, wherein is, at large, ſet forth the great neceſſity of General Councils, the great moderation and humility of their Proceedings and Addreſſes to *Eugenius*, and his obſtinate Behaviour towards them, which becauſe they perceive he daily increaſes, being incouraged by their patience and delay, they are reſolved to uſe ſharper remedies. And though they might proceed to a final ſentence againſt one ſo notoriouſly and obſtinately ſcandalizing the Church; notwithſtanding, out of maternal Piety, and at the requeſt of the Emperour *Sigiſmund*, they do the third time moſt earneſtly entreat, warn, cite, and require, and in the Name of Almighty God, do now laſtly and peremptorily command him, abſolutely to revoke the ſaid pretended, and notoriouſly ſcandalous diſſolution, and that he would declare, that this Sacred Council of *Baſil*, legally begun, according to the Decrees of the General Councils of *Conſtance*, and the approbation of Pope *Martin* the Fifth, and of *Eugenius* himſelf, has continued and always proceeded, and ought to have continuance and proceeding from the time of the beginning, and that he would purely, ſincerely and effectually adhere to the ſame, and that he would notifie this Revocation, Declaration, and Sincere Concurrence, by his Letters to the Council, ſealed after the manner of the *Roman* Court, within ſixty days. Which things, if he ſhall fully and effectually perform, within the limited time, they will yield him all due honour.

But

But if he continue obſtinate, the ſaid ſixty days being elapſed, then the Holy Synod, by the Power which they challenge to have from Almighty God, do ſuſpend the ſaid *Eugenius*, as contumacious and incorrigible, from all Papal adminiſtration in Spirituals and Temporals, and, if there ſhall be occaſion, without further citation, they will proceed to a final Sentence againſt him, and they declare and decree, that then all right of adminiſtration of the Papacy does devolve to the Sacred Synod, and they decree all acts done by *Eugenius*, after thoſe ſixty days, as Pope, to be null and void, and they require and in God's Name command all Kings, Princes, and Perſons of what degree or dignity ſoever, whether Secular, or Eccleſiaſtical, to yield no obedience to the ſaid *Eugenius*, during the ſaid Suſpenſion, upon pretext of any Oath, Allegiance or Promiſe of Fealty whatſoever.

In the thirteenth Seſſion the ſaid ſixty days being expired without ſatisfaction given to the Council, the promoters again accuſe *Eugenius* of Contumacy. Then the Arch-biſhop of *Spalata*, and the Biſhop of *Cervio*, Embaſſadors from *Eugenius*, appeared on his behalf, declaring, that the term of ſixty days was not fully ended: therefore the Council ought not then to proceed againſt him. To whom * *Julian*, Cardinal of of St. *Angelo*, in the name of the whole Council, replied, that the term of ſixty days was that day expired; and the Promoters of the Council, purſuant to the monitory Decree, had accuſed the Pope of Contumacy, becauſe he had not ſatisfied the Council in ſuch manner as was preſcribed: but they had as yet proceeded no further againſt him. Therefore, in the name of the Council, he required of them, that if he had ſatisfied the Council, or they, in his name, had.

* The Pope's Legate, and by him and *Martin* appointed to preſide, with Apoſtolical Authority.

had authority ſo to do, they would acquaint them. For if it were ſo, the Fathers of the Council would receive his concurrence with great Joy, and ſing *Te Deum*. But, if otherwiſe, the reverend Fathers would rather chuſe Death, than ſuffer the Church of God to be endangered upon the pretence of ſuch a diſſolution.

He added, That, at the earneſt requeſt of the Emperour *Sigiſmund*, the Council had prorogued the term of ſixty days, to thirty days longer, from that day, upon the ſame Penalties and Conditions contained in the former Decree of Citation.

Then the Embaſſadors, having no authority to ſatisfie the Council, were diſmiſſed, and the *Council* ſet forth another Citation, as they before had reſolved, much like the former.

At the end of the ſaid thirty days the *Emperour* arrived at *Baſil*, and then, at the fourteenth Seſſion, the *Council* prorogued the Monition to ninety days longer, but with this Condition, that if he did not effectually perform all and ſingular the Contents of one of the Three Forms of Adheſion preſcribed him by the Council, within that time, the Penalties contained in the Decrees of *Monition* ſhall be underſtood to be inflicted upon him.

Eugenius being alarumed by theſe great Preparations againſt him, and finding himſelf uncapable to ſupport, or any longer to avoid or ward the dreadful blow, ſubmitted himſelf within the limited time, in ſuch manner, that the Council declared themſelves abundantly ſatisfied.

Seſſ. 16. The Pope's Embaſſadors were receiv'd in the Council, *Apr.* 8. 1434. and did then ſwear to labour faithfully for the ſtate and honour of the Council of *Baſil*, and to defend and maintain its Decrees, and eſpecially the Decrees of the Council of *Conſtance*, declaring the Pope ſubject to the Decrees of that and every other General Council, in Matters of Faith, and puniſhable, if he contumaciouſly refuſe to obey them.

This I find in the *Appendix*, *p.* 161. to be the 17th Seſſ. but ſure 'tis rather the 16th Seſſ. and *Apr.* 24. as appears after.

The

The Contents of his Letter to the Council were:

'That he had, by the Advice and Conſent of his Cardinals, for certain Cauſes, diſſolved the Council of *Baſil*, which was legitimately begun according to the Decrees of the General Councils of *Conſtance* and *Siena*, and the Appointments of *Martin* the Fifth, and Himſelf, for the Extirpation of Hereſies, the Peace of Chriſtendom, and the General Reformation of the Church in its Head and Members, and what appertained to them. But ſeeing that great Diſſentions have, and greater may ariſe, by occaſion of the ſaid Diſſolution, he, by the Advice and Conſent of his Cardinals, declares, That the ſaid Council was legitimately continued, and always proceeded, and ought always to be continued and to proceed in relation to the premiſes, and all things pertaining thereto, from the time of its beginning, as if there had been no diſſolution. Moreover, he declares the ſaid diſſolution void, and that he does and will attend the Sacred Council of *Baſil*, plainly and effectually, with all Devotion and Favour. Beſides, that the Integrity and Devotion of his Mind towards the Univerſal Church, and the Sacred General Council of *Baſil*, may evidently appear to all men, he does revoke, make void, and annul, his Two Letters formerly publiſhed in his Court; and a Third likewiſe, becauſe it was deſired, though he denied that it was compoſed or publiſhed by him, his advice or knowledge, and he declares, that they were, and are, null and void, as alſo all other things done by him, or in his name, to the prejudice or in derogation of the ſaid Sacred General Council of *Baſil*, or what-

'whatever has been done, attempted, or asserted against 'its Authority, and does declare, that he will hence-'forward desist from offering any Novelty, Grievance or 'Prejudice to the Sacred Council, the Members or Adhe-'rents thereof.

The Substance of the First Letter or Bull, which *Eugenius* revoked, was,

'That whereas, for certain Causes, he had formerly 'dissolved the Council, which some said, was assembled 'at *Basil*, and intended to transfer it to *Bononia*. Those 'Causes afterwards ceasing, he decreed by his Legates, 'which should preside, in his name, at *Basil*, that the 'said Council ought to continue there. But whereas 'they who were, and are assembled at *Basil*, even after 'the said Dissolution and Decree, and also before the 'arrival of his Legates, not minding the Publick Good, 'but their Private Passions, and, not supported by the 'Authority of the Apostolick See, presumed to Dispose, 'Ordain, Appoint, Confirm, Declare and Command, 'to the great prejudice of Him, the Apostolick See, and 'the Cardinals, *&c.* contrary to the Decrees of the 'Holy Fathers, and the Canonical Sanctions, as if they, 'though he contradicted them, had the Authority of a 'General Synod; he, considering, that if he should 'pass over in silence those things, which they had so 'perversly decreed and done, it would tend to the great 'and evident prejudice of the Church and the Apostо-'lick See, the great scandal of very many, and to the 'nourishing of Schism and Heresie; and moreover 'being by his Pastoral Office, obliged to provide Pre-'sent Remedies, against Future Evils, he does, by the 'Tenor of these Presents, declare and decree, by his 'Apostolick

'Apoſtolick Authority, and by the Advice and Aſ-
'ſent of his Cardinals, all the Acts, Ordinances,
'Confirmations, Decrees, and Declarations, made by
'thoſe Perſons aſſembled at *Baſil, viz.* the Citations,
'Proceſſes and Sentences, the Statutes and Decrees
'concerning him the ſaid *Eugenius*, or againſt him,
'or againſt the Rights and Liberty of him, and the
'Apoſtolick See, and the venerable Cardinals, and
'thoſe things which they acted before the arrival of
'his Legates, and whatſoever ſhall for the future be
'decreed by them, beyond the power granted
'them by his Letters, to be void and of none ef-
'fect, *&c.* Dated at *Rome*, 1433. 4th *Cal. Aug.* the
'third Year of his Pontificate.

The Subſtance of the Second Bull, which *Eugenius* revoked, was,

'That whereas the Perſons aſſembled at *Baſil*, pub-
'liſhed a pretended Decree, requiring him, upon the
'Penalties therein contained, entirely to adhere to
'them within ſixty days, and required the Cardinals
'with him, in caſe he refuſed, within twenty days
'after the ſaid ſixty days, upon the Penalty of Privation
'of all their Offices, *&c.* to forſake the *Roman Court*;
'he declares and decrees the ſaid pretended Council,
'and all therein contained, to be utterly void, and of
'none effect.

The Third Bull, which he revoked to ſatisfie the Council, though he utterly denied, that it was publiſhed by him, his knowledge, or conſent, endeavours to clear him from the Accuſations of the Council, charging him, that, to introduce Scandal and Diſtur-

bance into the Church of God, he attempted to diſſolve the Council of *Baſil*, which he ought not to have done without the conſent thereof, *&c.*

Theſe Three Bulls being revoked on the Four and twentieth of *April*, One thouſand four hundred thirty and four, the Pope's Legates, *viz. Nicholaus* Cardinal of the *Holy Croſs*, the Arch-biſhop of *Tarentum*, the Biſhop of *Padua*, and the Abbot of Saint *Juſtin*, were incorporated into the Council: but it was ordered, that, at the Incorporation of the Pope's Oratours, they ſhould ſwear faithfully to labour for the ſtate and honour of this Sacred Council, and to maintain its Decrees, eſpecially the Decree of the Fifth Seſſion of the Sacred Council of *Conſtance*, ſubjecting Popes to the General Councils in Matters of Faith, and declaring Popes ſubject to puniſhment, if they diſobeyed the Decrees of that or any other General Council in Matters of Faith.

In the Seventeenth Seſſion *Nicholaus* of the Title of the *Holy Croſs* in *Jeruſalem*, *Julian* of Saint *Angelo*, Cardinals, *John* Arch-biſhop of *Tarentum*, *Peter* Biſhop of *Padua*, and *Ludovicus* Abbot of Saint *Juſtin*, were admitted by the Council to preſide therein, in the Name and Place of *Eugenius*, upon certain Conditions and Clauſes, which ſhould continue in force throughout, *viz.* that they ſhould have no coactive Juriſdiction. That the Orders of Proceeding in the Council hitherto obſerved ſhould ſtill continue, eſpecially thoſe Articles of *September*, the Twenty ſixth, 1430. which ordained how Matters were to be prepared and debated in the General Seſſions.

The

The Council again confirmed and renewed the Decrees of the Council of *Conſtance*, mentioned before in the ſixteenth Seſſion of this Council, ſubjecting the Pope to the Decrees of every General Council, in Matters of Faith, *&c.* Three days before this, *Eugenius* ſends an Epiſtle to his venerable Brothers and beloved Sons, aſſembled in the Sacred Council at *Baſil*, to this purpoſe, *Seſſ.* 18. *June* 25. 1434.

That though any one might judge, by former proceedings, that his mind was not altogether free from clouds: yet if what has been offer'd them from him, by his Orators, eſpecially of late, be duly conſidered, the ſerenity of his heart may be ſufficiently diſcerned. That he always had the ſame deſign which they had: he onely differ'd from them in the place of celebrating the Council, he always deſired Peace, and the Reformation of the Church: and for this reaſon he not onely yielded to them, but alſo, by his Letters, conſented to their Decree, according as they did dictate. His purpoſe and deſire is to love them as Sons, and obſerve them as Brothers, and he doubts not but that they will preſerve faithful and devout hearts to the Apoſtolick See. This his confidence, he ſays, is grounded upon the joy they expreſſed upon his conſent to the Sacred General Council, and upon his hearing, that his Preſidents were now ſo united with them in affection and indeavours, that they ſeemed almoſt to be one. *Baſ. Con. Append. p.* 214. *June* 22. 1434.

February the 16th 1435. he writes this Epiſtle to his Legates, Preſidents of the Council: *Baſ. Con. Append. p.* 214.

'It is not unuſual for the Enemy of Mankind to 'ſow Tares, that even amongſt thoſe who con- 'tend with equal Piety, that they may meet in the 'ſame end, (out of the very methods of proceeding, 'which differ according to the diverſities of humane 'capacity) Contentions may ariſe to wound mu- 'tual charity. This formerly we have perceived 'to have happened betwixt us and ſome of the ve- 'nerable Brothers and beloved Sons of the Sacred 'General Council of *Baſil*, which by Divine cle- 'mency at laſt was peaceably agreed. Afterwards, 'as if ſome new difference had riſen betwixt us and 'them, we were required by new Orators of that 'General Council, concering the obſervation of their 'concluſion with the *Greeks*, concerning giving In- 'dulgences, not admitting the Cauſes of the Mem- 'bers of the ſaid Council, not calling our Officials to 'our Courts, concerning Elections to be expected 'or confirmed, concerning not receiving Annates and 'Commune Services. To all which we fully an- 'ſwered by our Orators, and though, by thoſe An- 'ſwers, we may hope to have ſatisfied the Sacred 'Council, we judged it not needleſs, if any difficulty, 'or ſcruple, or ſuſpicion, ſhould happen to remain, 'to provide more fully, and more amply to mani- 'feſt our deſire of Peace and Unity, ſo that every 'little cloud being removed, we may with united 'and ſerene minds, purſue thoſe things which con- 'cern the Honour of God, and the Good of the 'Chriſtian Common-wealth. Theſe things being 'conſidered, We, with the Advice of our Cardinals, 'by the Tenor of theſe Preſents, do grant full and 'free power to your care, (of which we have great

'confi-

'confidence) to remove, quiet, and agree, all and 'ſingular the Differences, Difficulties, and Suſpicions, 'if any, as we ſaid, on the forementioned occaſions, 'do yet remain, or ſhall hereafter happen to ariſe, 'with ſufficient proviſion nevertheleſs firſt made, 'as to Annates and Common Services, and other 'things contain'd in an Ordination of the ſame Ge-'neral Council, and received and approved by the 'Nations and Provinces. And alſo to do other things 'in and about the premiſes, which you ſhall judge 'may produce true and perfect charity betwixt us, 'and our Brothers and Sons, to the glory of God, 'the exaltation of the Orthodox Chriſtian Faith, 'and the conſervation of the Honour and Dignity of 'the Apoſtolick See, and we will accept and ratifie 'whatſoever, in the premiſes, ſhall be ordered, agreed 'and concluded by you.

Notwithſtanding that theſe Differences ſeemed to be ſo fairly compoſed, and ſuch proviſion made to prevent new ones, that none could interpoſe to interrupt their proceedings, yet the Emperour and Patriarch of *Conſtantinople* being to come to the Council, in order to unite theirs with the *Roman Church*, the Council and Pope ſo quarrelled about the choice of the place where the meeting ſhould be, that it cauſed a final breach betwixt them. They grievouſly charged one another; he them with obſtructing the union by their inconſtancy, and choice of a place diſapproved by the *Greeks*, and injuriouſly and ignominiouſly treating one of his Legates: for which, and other cauſes, he transfers the Council to *Ferrara*. They ſend out a Monition and Citation againſt him, wherein, though they *Baſ. Con. Append. p.* 215.

Sept. 19. 1437. *Seſſ.* 26.

they ſtile him *moſt holy*, yet they accuſe him of Simony, Perjury, and other Hainous Crimes, and peremptorily command him to appear before them
Seſſ. 28. within ſixty days: but he, not appearing in that
Seſſ. 29. term, is declared contumacious, and, amongſt other crimes, is accuſed of breach of Faith, in indeavouring, by tranſlating the Council, to violate a De-
Seſſ. 19. cree, by himſelf approved, in which it is reſolved, that the Council ſhall firmly remain at *Baſil*, till ſuch time as the *Grecians* arrive at that Port, which this Synod ſhall name.

Seſſ 31. *Eugenius*, in the Thirty firſt Seſſion, is by the Council ſuſpended from all Papal Juriſdiction, both Spiritual and Temporal.

In the Thirty fourth Seſſion he is as contumacious, diſobedient, a contemner and violater of the Holy Canons of the Councils, a diſturber of the Peace and Unity of the Church, ſimoniacal, perjur'd, incorrigible, ſchiſmatical, pertinaciouſly heretical, *&c.* depoſed from all Pontifical Adminiſtration, Title, Degree, Honour and Dignity, *&c.*

Seſſ. 35. In the Thirty fifth Seſſion it was decreed, that the Council of *Baſil* could by no means be diſſolved, but by the conſent of two parts of the ſame.

In the Thirty eighth Seſſion the Council orders the manner of Electing a new Pope, and appoint a Form of an Oath, to be taken by him at his Election, wherein, amongſt other things, he engages to obſerve the Decrees of the Councils of *Conſtance* and *Baſil*.

Seſſ. 38. In the Thirty eighth Seſſion the Council declares againſt an Invective, ſet forth by *Gabriel*, formerly *Eugenius*, juſtifying his tranſlation of the Council to *Ferrara*, and condemning them to have perverted the

the ſence of the Council of *Conſtance*, declaring in the Thirty third Seſſion theſe Three *Catholick Truths* following, as conſequences of the Decrees of the Fourth and Fifth Seſſions of that Council.

Firſt, 'The Truth of the Power of a General Coun-'cil, repreſenting the Univerſal Church over the 'Pope and every other perſon, declared by the Gene-'ral Councils of *Conſtance*, and this of *Baſil*, is a Truth 'of the Catholick Faith.

Secondly, This Truth, 'That the Pope has no Au-'thority to diſſolve, to prorogue, or transfer from 'one place to another, a General Council, with-'out the conſent thereof, is a Truth of the Catholick 'Faith.

Thirdly, 'He is to be eſteemed an Heretick, who 'does pertinaciouſly oppoſe theſe Two foreſaid 'Truths.

They add, 'That *Gabriel* does alſo by obſcurity 'of words endeavour to perplex the World, ſaying, 'that he does condemn thoſe foreſaid Truths in the 'ſence of the Council of *Baſil*, yet neither does he 'explain that ſence, nor manifeſt in what ſence he 'approves them, in which, perhaps, he is ſilent, 'becauſe he manifeſtly ſees, that the words of the 'foreſaid Truths are ſo clear, that they cannot juſtly 'be taxed with any obſcurity, or drawn into dif-'ferent ſences, and by conſequence that firſt ſence, 'according to which, he ſays, he does reprobate the 'ſaid Truths cannot be denied. They declare to all 'Catholicks, that they have not, nor intend to have

'any

'any other ſence in their Declarations, than that of 'the Council of *Conſtance*, that true Catholick ſence 'which they always had in their Decrees, made in the 'Second, Eleventh, Twelfth, Twenty ninth, and other 'Seſſions, and in their Synodical Epiſtles, and in like 'manner held by the Cardinals of the Roman Church, 'the Patriarchs, Archbiſhops, Biſhops, Orators of Prin-'ces, Abbots, Doctors, who were at their Synods, and 'unanimouſly believed that a General Council has pow-'er immediately from Chriſt, to which the Pope ought 'to obey, according as the ſaid truth, declared in the 'Council of *Conſtance*, does define; and that this truth 'is of Divine Right, that the Pope has no Authority 'to diſſolve, or transfer from one place to another a ge-'neral Council, Legitimately called, without the con-'ſent thereof. Which truths *Gabriel* himſelf acknow-'ledged, when after two years continued obſtinacy, in 'which he endeavoured to juſtifie the ſaid diſſolution, 'he was forced by the commands of the Council, judi-'cially to revoke whatever had been attempted, alledg-'ed, or done by him, or in his name, in derogation of 'the ſaid Council, or its Authority, and did acquieſce 'in the judgment of the Council, preſenting judicially 'before it, the Form of his Confeſſion, according as the 'Council had ordained. They require all Catholicks 'to judge what a great blow the Church of God will 'receive, if that declaration of the Council of *Conſtance* 'be called in queſtion, by whoſe vigor and irreſiſtible 'Authority, *John* the Twenty third or Twenty fourth, 'according to *Platina*, and *Benedict* were Depoſed, and '*Martin* Elected, to whom *Eugenius* ſucceeded, by which 'two, conſequently all creations of Cardinals, Promo-'tions of Prelates, and other Eccleſiaſtical Orders and 'Degrees were made.

It

It cannot be denied but that the Proceedings of theſe two laſt Councils has given ſuch a blow to the *Roman Church*, that thereby all pretence of Infallibility is utterly overthrown; for though the *Romaniſts* are ſo nice and tender in declaring where their Supremacy and Infallibility is fixed, that that uncertainty makes them uſeleſs, though it ſhould be granted that they had them. Yet the Decrees of the Council of *Conſtance*, and this of *Baſil*, place them undeniably in the Council alone. For the Council of *Conſtance* challenged that Priviledge and Power; by vertue of which they depoſed *John* the Twenty third, or Twenty fourth, according to *Platina*, who ſubmitted, acknowledged the Infallibility of the Council, and confirmed its Decrees. *Gregory* the Twelfth alſo, when he reſigned, impowered *Malateſta*, and others, to confirm the Decrees of the ſame Council, which was done in his name by Cardinal *Raguſinus*; and theſe two were the onely perſons who had any reaſonable pretence to the Pontificate. Afterwards the ſame Council, by vertue of this Power and Priviledge, elected *Martin* the Fifth into the Papacy, who likewiſe, at the diſſolution of the Council, confirmed all the Decrees thereof, in matters of Faith, and promiſed inviolably to obſerve, and never to contradict the ſame; nay, ſo Sacred did he account them, *that to acknowledge, that the Council of *Conſtance* did repreſent the Univerſal Church, and that what it did approve in Matters of Faith and Salvation of Souls, ought to be held and maintained, and what it condemned, as contrary to Faith and Good Manners, ought to be rejected

* *Conc. Gen. Bin. Tom. 3. Par. 2. p. 1655. Dat. 8. Cal. Mar.*

jected by all Christ's faithful People, was one of the Methods appointed by *Martin*, during the Council, whereby any one, who was suspected to be guilty of, or to favour the Heresies of *Wicliff*, or *Huss*, was to purge and clear himself from that suspicion. This *Eugenius* also, after he had two years obstinately persisted in his endeavours to dissolve the Council, revoked the Bulls of Dissolution, as has been declared. And that he approved their Proceedings, appears by his foresaid Epistle to the Council, after his Ambassadours had sworn to maintain the Honour of the Council and its Decrees, and after his Presidents were admitted into the Council upon the limitations afore-mentioned. And by his Letter to his Presidents, dated *February* 1435. almost a Year after that, and eight Months after the Council had in the Eighteenth Session again repeated the Decrees of the Council of *Constance* before-mentioned.

Platina discerns the fatal consequence of this Pope's submission to the Council, (though he takes no notice that three other Popes had done the same) for, he says, *Eugenius* confounded things Divine and Humane: for he gave Authority to the Council of *Basil*, and, by his Apostolical Letters, approved their Decrees, whence infinite Evils have sprung.

Bin. Con. Gen. Tom. 4. p. 97. The Bull of *Nicholas*, of his approbation of the Acts of the Council at *Basil*.

And, that these Decrees might want no confirmation, *Nicholas* the Fifth, (who succeeded *Eugenius*, upon the resignation of *Amedeus*, Duke of

Savoy,

Savoy, whom the Council of *Basil* had elected Pope, by the Name of *Felix* the Fifth: and upon the dissolution of the said Council, who had adjourned to *Lausana*, and their acknowledgment of the said *Nicholas*) did, with the Advice of his Cardinals, approve, ratifie, and confirm all and singular what was acted by the Ordinaries at both the said places, and denounced the Wrath of Almighty God, and the blessed Apostles, *Peter* and *Paul*, upon any one who should presume to contradict or infringe this Bull of his said Approbation, Ratification, Confirmation, *Dat.* 14. *Cal. Jul.* 1449.

At this time all the Opinions of this visible Infallibility and Supremacy were onely these, that I can find; some said, that they did reside in the General Council and Pope; some said, in the Pope alone; and others held, that they were lodged in the General Council alone.

Now these two last Councils challenging them by their often repeated Decrees to that purpose, and four Popes confirming those Decrees, must unavoidably draw all persons, who were of the two first Opinions to settle in the last, or reject all: for the use of a visible infallible Guide being to quiet all Doubts, and avoid all Errors in Matters of Faith, and to direct and lead into the way of truth, the right determining and knowledge who this unerring Guide is, must be acknowledged to be, as it were, the Cardinal Article, Chief Hinge upon which all the other Articles of our Faith ought necessarily to move and depend, and indeed

ought to be one of the firſt Principles of Faith, wherein every Chriſtian ſhould be inſtructed. It ought to be ſo certain, ſtable, and unmovable, as not to be altered, but by the Eſpecial and Signal Command of Almighty God himſelf; for any alteration wholly deſtroys its Authority, by ſetting up another Supremacy to controul it, which is inconſiſtent with its nature, eſpecially in this caſe, becauſe theſe Councils challenge the Supremacy of General Councils to proceed immediately from Chriſt, and the Council of *Baſil.* pronounces all obſtinate oppoſers to be Hereticks, and it were moſt abſurd to imagine, that *Chriſt* would impower Hereticks to diſſolve or alter a Supreme and and Infallible Guide, which he promiſed to ſecure and defend againſt the *Gates of Hell.*

Bin. Tom. 4. *p.* 83.

It muſt therefore unavoidably follow, that if all the Pretenders to Infallibility and Supremacy agree to place it in any one or more of them, either that it is then rightly placed and cannot admit of a change, (except by God himſelf) or, if they miſplace it, it is an undeniable Argument, that all their Pretences thereto are vain, and that they act by a forged Commiſſion.

Therefore all the Arguments urged by this *Eugenius*, or by *Pius* the Second, in his Bull of Retractations, have either no force at all to overthrow theſe Decrees, or if they have any, they equally involve the other Pretenders in their ruin.

Now

Now it appears plainly enough from what has been ſaid, that the Roman Church are by the Authority of theſe two General Councils, reduced to a neceſſity of owning all that has been determined in matters of Faith by the General Councils of *Milan*, *Syrmium*, *Ariminum*, the ſecond at *Epheſus*, and any other whatſoever, whether they had the conſent of the Pope or not; or at leaſt, to lay down their claim of having any ſuch Univerſal Infallible Judge amongſt themſelves, as they obſtinately pretend to have.

But that the fall of this Kingdom might be ſo conſpicuous, that all who wilfully cloſed not their eyes, might eaſily diſcern it, it was after in the *Lateran* Council ſo divided againſt it ſelf, that if our bleſſed Saviour's words have any Authority, it muſt be brought to deſolation: for *Leo* the tenth not enduring thoſe limitations, and curbs, which theſe two laſt Councils, with the concurrence and conſent of five Popes put upon the Papal Juriſdiction, rather choſe totally to confound the Supremacy and Infallibility of the Church of *Rome*, than retain them upon ſuch, as he thought, diſgraceful terms to him and his Succeſſors, as will appear by his decretal Epiſtle, dated 1516. confirmed by the approbation of the whole *Lateran* Council (one Biſhop excepted) wherein he at large declares, That the *Pragmatical Sanction before mentioned was in times paſt, and yet continues in force to the great ſcandal and danger of Souls and derogation of the Apoſtolick See. And though, upon many accounts, it was of it ſelf void, and did nouriſh and maintain Schiſm, and therefore without any citation,* Bin. Tom. 4. p. 639.

citation, might have been declared null and invalid. Notwithſtanding, out of abundant caution, his Predeceſſor Julius *the Second, and he, had by publick Edict, cited the Abettors thereof to appear before this Council, and ſhew cauſe why the ſaid Sanction, with its corruption and abuſe in things concerning the Apoſtolick Church, and the violation of the holy Canon and Eccleſiaſtical Liberty, ought not to be declared null and void; and this was ſeveral times done, and the execution ſeveral times deferr'd, that no place might be left for an excuſe: and yet though all impediments had been removed, and all terms limited for their appearance were expired, the maintainers of the ſaid Sanction neither did nor would appear, therefore becauſe it is neceſſary to ſalvation that all Chriſt's faithful people ſhould be ſubject to the Biſhop of* Rome, *though ſome of his Predeceſſors, the Popes of* Rome, *being unable wholly to obviate this corruption and abuſe, did ſeem to tolerate it; yet conſidering that † Seventy Years being ſcarce run out ſince the publication of the ſaid Sanction, he can no longer, with a ſafe conſcience, deſiſt from a total extirpation of this wicked Sanction. Nor ought it to move him, that the Sanction it ſelf, and all therein contained, had their riſe from the Council of* Baſil, *and at the inſtance of the ſame Council were received and accepted by the Aſſembly at* Boruges. *Seeing that all thoſe things were done in that Synod, or rather Conventicle, after the tranſlation thereof; ſo that it deſerved no longer to be called a Council, having no force, becauſe the Pope, having Authority over all Councils, has full right and power of aſſembling, tranſlating, and diſſolving them: Therefore notwithſtanding the Premiſes, as alſo the Conſtitutions, Decrees, and Statutes publiſhed by Apoſtolical*

† By this he ſeems to allow that 70 years would have made a preſcription; and indeed there was 78 years, as appears by the dates of this Letter, and the Pragmatical Sanction.

lical or Synodical Authority whatſoever, and of certain knowledge often confirmed, and approved (they otherwiſe remaining in their force) he does by the premiſed Tenour, aboliſh the ſaid Sanction; and concludes, That if any one ſhall preſume to infringe theſe Letters of Declaration, Revocation, and Annullation, he ſhall incur the indignation of Almighty God, and the bleſſed Apoſtles Peter *and* Paul.

One of the Decrees of this Pragmatical Sanction, was, That the Authority of the Declarations of the Council of *Baſil* ſhall be perpetual, which no one, no not the Pope himſelf ſhall preſume to weaken, or take away. Therefore it was a bold ſtroke in *Leo*, and the *Lateran* Council, to aboliſh the ſaid Sanction as ſcandalous and wicked, though he confeſſed, that it had its riſe from, and at the inſtance of, the Council of *Baſil* it was received; one of whoſe Decrees pronounces him to be an Heretick, who denies that Popes are ſubject to General Councils, and have no Authority to diſſolve, prorogue, or transfer them, without their conſent. Bin. Tom. 4. p. 410.

Nor is it ſufficient which *Leo* affirms, That theſe things were done in the Synod, after the tranſlation thereof: for all things concerning the Pope and Council, which were contained in the Sanction, were decreed by the Council, and confirmed by *Eugenius*, before the pretended Tranſlation; though indeed the Sanction it ſelf was not decreed till after.

Now though this Pope and Council diſagreed from the two former Councils confirmed by at the leaſt

leaſt three Popes, where the Supremacy and Infallibility ought to be placed; yet in this it is agreed, that the right placing it, is of Divine Inſtitution, and the acknowledgement thereof, and obedience thereto, is neceſſary to ſalvation. The Council of *Conſtance* challenged it above the Pope; and *John*, who was depoſed, declared that it could not erre; *Martin* alſo, at the diſſolution thereof, confirmed all its Decrees.

Bin. Tom. 4. p. 111, & 113. The Council of *Baſil*, on their own behalf, and all other General Councils claimed the ſame Authority, declaring, that *Eugenius* his endeavour to diſſolve them, *tended to the notorious ſcandal of the Chriſtian Religion; that the Article in debate concerns the Faith, which cannot be neglected, without deſtruction to ſalvation; and that if he will not hear the Church, he ought to be accounted an Heathen and a Publicane.* After this, and much more to this purpoſe, he ſubmitted, in ſuch manner as I have declared.

Now whether the Supremacy and Infallibility belongs to the General Councils, to whom the Popes ought to obey, or to the Popes above them, it can no ways be demonſtrated, without the concurrence of them both, where they ought to be placed.

The Decrees of the Council of *Baſil*, challenging them to be in the General Councils above the Popes, and pronouncing thoſe to be Hereticks, who deny their Claim, prove they cannot belong to the Popes above the General Councils.

Leo

Leo and the *Lateran* Council, declaring it neceſſary to ſalvation, that all Chriſt's faithful People ſhould be ſubject to the Biſhop of *Rome*; and that the Pope has Authority over all Councils, and denouncing the indignation of Almighty God, *&c.* againſt the infringers of that Bull, prove they cannot be in the General Councils above the Popes. Therefore this contradiction of each others, nay indeed the ſame Authority, overthrows the common foundation, without which neither Title can be ſupported: ſo that the pretended Supremacy and Infallibility is undeniably proved *Felo de ſe*; and if there is any truth in their ſeveral Decrees againſt each other, *viz.* the pronouncing thoſe to be Hereticks who deny them to the General Councils, and the denouncing the ſaid indignations againſt thoſe who deny it to the Popes, they onely prove that all they are Hereticks, or incur the ſaid indignations, who ever have, or ever ſhall pretend to ſuch Authority; and thoſe are undoubtedly very unfit qualifications for Infallible Guides to Heaven, and for Interpreters of holy Scriptures, by the miſ-interpretation of which, they have forged a falſe Commiſſion, and have fallen from the true Faith, into ſo notorious Errours.

I think I have now ſufficiently proved, that either the Romaniſts do not think themſelves obliged to obey the Decrees of every General Council, or that if they do, it is very unſafe for us to follow their Examples. I think likewiſe, that the inconſiſtency of their General Councils one with another, is ſo plain, even about their very Title, and Claim to Infallibility, that I might ſpare any further enquiry therein.

But beſides theſe, as I think unanſwerable Objections againſt the pretended Infallibility, there yet remains another, from which if it be not cleared, it will prove uſeleſs. I ſuppoſe every one will grant, that to prove an Infallible Guide uſeful, it muſt appear, that that Guide has ſo plainly interpreted Scriptures, and made ſuch clear Definitions of Faith, that there ſhall remain nothing in their Definitions ſo hard to be underſtood, that unlearned men may be in danger to wreſt them to their deſtruction, and no colour left for Hereticks to maintain their damnable Hereſies; but that all doubts are ſo fully reſolved, that *Laicks* may have free recourſe to them, without the leaſt danger: otherwiſe this Infallible Guide will be liable to all the Objections with which the *Romaniſts* charge the holy Scriptures, and conſequently as dangerous and uſeleſs as they pretend the Scriptures are.

But that the ſame difficulties remain againſt the pretended Infallibility, will evidently appear by examining the Proceedings of ſome of the General Councils.

Pope *Vigilius*, and the ſecond General Council at *Conſtantinople*, did for their contradictory Opinions, both alledge the General Council at *Chalcedon*.

In the ſixth General Council at *Conſtantinople*, both the Orthodox Fathers, and the *Monothelites* owned the five former General Councils, and the approved Fathers; and equally claimed them to ſupport their different Doctrines. In the Council of *Trent*, though that Synod decreed that the intention of the Prieſt was neceſſary to confer a Sacrament, yet the Biſhop of *Minori* writ that it was not; alledging, that the

Sea. Pol. pag. 242.

Decree

Decree ought to be interpreted in his ſence, *Soto* and *Vega*, two great Managers of the ſame Council, writ Doctrines contrary to each other, and alledged the Decree of that Synod for their Authorities; which inconſiſtencies might well happen, becauſe *Santa Croce*, one of the Pope's Preſidents, ſeeing he could not reconcile the Opponents, framed the Decrees ſo ambiguouſly, like the ancient Heathen Oracles, as to fit all different Opinions. Pag. 216. Pag. 215.

By theſe Proofs it plainly appears, that the Interpretations of the General Councils are as uncertain as the Scriptures, and conſequently as dangerous at leaſt, and uſeleſs; which, it may be, was the cauſe why the laſt General Council at the *Lateran*, and this at *Trent*, forbad all perſons, under great Curſes, to explain and comment on their Decrees, except by authority from the Pope.

Though I intended to ſay no more of this matter, yet I muſt not omit anſwering ſome Objections.

Bellarmine ſays, that the Council of *Conſtance* did not define abſolutely, that General Councils have power from *Chriſt* over Popes; but onely in time of Schiſm, when it is not known who is Pope, for a doubtful Pope is accounted no Pope; and ſo to have power over him, is not to have power over Popes. That it was not then a General Council, there being onely a third part of the Church, *viz.* thoſe under the obedience of *John*, which could not define Articles of Faith, and that there was then no Pope, *John* being retired. *Lib. 2. de Con. Autho. cap. 19.*

Nor indeed did *Martin* confirm that Decree: for he elegantly ſaid, that he confirmed thoſe Decrees, which were Synodically, that is, after the manner of other Councils, the matter being diligently examined,

&c. One would think, by these Objections, either that *Bellarmine* had never read the Decrees of the Councils of *Constance*, and *Basil*, or that he believed no one else had or would: for the Council of *Constance* claimed their Authority over Popes, immediately from *Christ* in matters of Faith, and not in time of Schism; and they repeated that Decree, and made another, subjecting Popes who disobeyed that or any other General Council in matters of Faith, to condign punishment six days after that; which surely was as mature deliberation as the Council of *Trent* used, when principal Articles were defined by a number of five at the most; nor was *John* deposed as a doubtful Pope, but as a Criminal.

I make this answer only to manifest *Bellarmine*'s disingenuity: for I might have answered all his Objections, by repeating briefly some of the Proceedings at *Basil*, where *Eugenius*, an unquestionable Pope, after two years dispute with the Council concerning this matter, wherein they declare that the Question in debate concerns the Faith, *&c.* (which I hope will be granted to be diligent and due examination) submitted, and confirmed the Decrees of that Council, as I have shewed.

Bin. Tom. 4. pag. 111.

OF

OF THE

Rule of Faith.

THis Treatiſe hitherto pretendeth to overthrow the way of Reſolving Faith into the Infallibility of General Councils, by proving, that they have Erred. But becauſe this does but ſhew what we are not to truſt to, not what we ought to Truſt, I am unwilling this Diſcourſe ſhould end without ſome debate concerning the True Rule of Faith, to ſhew what it is, in oppoſition to Falſe Pretenders.

It might have happened, that Fathers had not contradicted Fathers, nor Councils contradicted Councils, nor Churches contradicted Churches, nor that Church contradicted herſelf which pretends to be the onely Guide in Matters of Faith. And even in this Caſe we might have enquired, what is the True Rule of Faith, and concluded upon Reaſons proper to the Thing, that theſe are not, becauſe it is ſomething elſe diſtinct from all theſe, which is that Rule.

Now, as to this Matter, I may ſay, that I have made the Judgment of the Church of *England*, my own Judgment, ſince I have not onely learned of her

her *What* to Judge in it, but think my ſelf alſo to have learned *Why*. And when the Authority of a Church is the firſt inducement to conſider what ſhe teaches, and the Reaſon of the thing it ſelf the laſt cauſe of Aſſenting to it, it is for the credit of the Church, no leſs then of the *Man* to *believe as the Church believes.*

I ſhall therefore firſt ſet down the Judgment of the Church in this Caſe, and then the Reaſons why I cannot but ſubmit to it.

Our Church declares, in her Sixth Article, That *Holy Scripture containeth all things neceſſary to Salvation, ſo that whatſoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it ſhould be believed as an Article of the Faith, or be thought requiſite or neceſſary to Salvation.* And *in the Name of the Holy Scripture ſhe underſtands thoſe Canonical Books of the Old and New Teſtament, of whoſe Authority was never any doubt in the Church.* So that the Church of *England* declares the Holy Scriptures to be the *Rule of Faith.*

To which purpoſe alſo the Cloſe of the Twentieth Article runs: *Although the Church be a Witneſs and a Keeper of Holy Writ, yet as it ought not to Decree any thing againſt the ſame, ſo beſides the ſame it ought not to Enforce any thing to be believed for neceſſity of Salvation.* Which words ſuppoſe Holy Writ to be a perfect Rule, inaſmuch as nothing ought to be taken away from it, by decreeing any thing *againſt the ſame*, nor any thing added to it, by enforcing any belief as neceſſary to Salvation, which is *beſides the ſame.*

This

This is the *Rule* which I at first received in submission to this Church, and being upon mature deliberation more and more confirmed, that she has dealt herein sincerely and faithfully, I do not onely acknowledge it with all thankfulness, but think my self obliged in some degree to represent to others some of the Reasons of my persuasion.

I am well assured, that the Profession of *Christians*, as such, cannot be made reasonable to the World, but by resolving their Belief of the several Doctrines which they, *as Christians*, profess into this Reason, that *God hath revealed them.*

For whatever may be said, and that very justly of the excellent usefulness of *Christian* Faith, for promoting Piety and Vertue, and the Congruity of its Doctrines to the common Notions of Mankind; all this can be no more than an Inducement to take them into farther Consideration, and afterwards an Additional Argument to confirm us in relying upon those other Arguments which are the proper Foundation of Faith, *viz. Testimonies of Divine Revelation.* And therefore if I am assured, that the Bible is an Authentick Book, delivering Divine Revelations, it must be *A Rule of my Faith.* And if no other Authority can justly pretend to do the same, it must also be the *Onely* Rule of my Faith.

For the former I have this Evidence, that the Holy Scriptures have a more unquestionable Tradition, than any other Books in the World, that we know

know of, ever had: ſince they have been conveyed down to us in ſuch circumſtances, as have made the Tradition of them from the times in which they were written, to our days, one of the moſt Notorious Tranſactions that ever were in the World, I think I may ſafely ſay, *the moſt Notorious.* So that if in any caſe I may be aſſured, that I read what an Ancient Author once wrote, I am beyond all doubt ſatisfied, that here I meet Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, *though dead, yet ſpeaking to me.* And then what they ſay I believe upon thoſe Teſtimonies here alſo recorded, which are an undoubted Argument, that God revealed to them what they delivered to the World.

Finally, I cannot make the leaſt queſtion of the Truth of what they have related as to theſe Teſtimonies, becauſe being Matters of Fact not done in a Corner, but in the Face of the World, the Credibility of them could not be ſhaken by the Powers of Earth and Hell engaged to ſuppreſs that Doctrine which was built upon them.

This and much more may be ſaid to this purpoſe; and thus far the *Romaniſts* are equally concerned with us for the maintaining of Common *Chriſtianity* againſt Infidels. And the Scriptures are granted to be *A Rule of Faith* on both ſides.

But the Queſtion is, Whether they are to be received as the *Onely* Rule of Faith. For there are who ſay, that the Word of God delivered by *Chriſt*, and revealed to the Apoſtles, is partly contained in the

the Holy Scriptures, and partly in Unwritten Traditions, of which the Church is the *Keeper*, and, as occaſion requires, the *Publiſher* in her General Councils from Time to Time; but that theſe Traditions were in the Church before ſuch occaſional publication of them, and ſtood upon as good evidence, that they were at firſt delivered by the Apoſtles, as thoſe very Articles of Faith that were written by them.

Others ſay, that beſides this, it appears from the Scriptures themſelves, that we ought to ſubmit to the Teſtimony of the Church, declaring what is to be received with Faith, and conſequently to believe, that ſhe truly diſpenſes Traditions received from the Apoſtles, even where the particulars that ſhe declares are not to be proved by Scripture.

Now, if it be true, that the Apoſtles left ſome neceſſary Points of Faith, of which they ſaid nothing in their Writings, to be conveyed down ſome other way, from Age to Age, and if theſe have been conveyed down with ſuch Evidence of the Original from whence they came, as the Scriptures have; I think he that receives the Scriptures, and does not receive thoſe Unwritten Traditions, muſt needs be either an Ignorant or an Obſtinate Man. Or if the Scriptures which we do receive ſufficiently acquaint us, that there was to be a ſtanding Authority in the Church, eaſie to be known by every body, to whoſe Declarations all were to ſubmit with the obedience of Faith even in things not declared in the Writings of the Apoſtles and Evan-

geliſts, this alſo would argue either Incapacity or Wilfulneſs in thoſe that refuſe to acknowledge another Rule of Faith beſides the Scriptures. We are therefore now to conſider what Reaſon there is for theſe Suppoſitions which would bring in Unwritten Traditions to be a partner with the Written Word in the Ruling of our Faith. And becauſe our Obligation to receive ſuch a Supplemental Rule muſt ariſe either from the Evidence of Tradition, which is a thing credible in it ſelf, or from the Teſtimony of the Scriptures themſelves, which we have already received as a Rule of Faith: I ſhall ſpeak diſtinctly to both theſe Pretences; And,

Firſt of *the Evidence of Tradition*, which is a Thing credible in it ſelf. But before I enter upon this Argument I think fit to premiſe two things.

I deny not that the Apoſtles taught the *Chriſtians* of thoſe days ſeveral things which we do not find in their Writings, and which are now loſt for want of being committed to Writing. For it is plain from the Scripture it ſelf, that all is not written which they taught. Saint *Paul* told the *Theſſalonians*, that they *knew what withheld the Revealing of the Man of Sin*; Therefore himſelf, or ſome other inſpired perſon had made this Revelation known to them, and it is likely to other Churches too. But it is not written what that Obſtacle was in particular. And who can now ſay what it is with that aſſurance which he might have expreſſed, if that had been written too? It were a vain thing to imagine this to be the onely Inſtance of Inſtructions that

2 Theſſ. 11. 13.

that were not written, and which, for not having been written have had no certain Tradition.

But yet I acknowledge, that the Interpretations of the Fathers may very often give light, and lead us to a probable ſence of the more obſcure Intimations of ſome Texts of Scripture. Thus from the Writings of ſome of the Fathers, it ſeems probable that the Tradition which went amongſt the Ancient *Chriſtians* concerning that which withheld the Revelation of the *Man of Sin* was this; That the Strength and Greatneſs of the *Roman* Empire hindred his coming; and the Diſſolution of that Empire into many Kingdoms and Sovereignties, was to be the Door at which he would enter and ſhew himſelf to the World.

Neither do I deny, that the General Practice of the Church immediately after the days of the Apoſtles, is the beſt Interpreter of many Texts of Scripture, eſpecially of thoſe which ſpeak of the Government and Diſcipline of the Church, many of which are not ſo clear and full, but that in order to a true underſtanding of them, it will be neceſſary to inquire what was that Ancient Practice of the Catholick Church in theſe Matters which ſtands upon Good Tradition.

But I deny, with our Church, that there is any Doctrine to be *required of any man, that it ſhould be believed as an Article of Faith, or be thought requiſite or neceſſary to Salvation, which is not read in Holy Scripture, nor may be proved thereby.* And in the

first place, I deny that any such Doctrines have *Evidence of Tradition*; which I have already acknowledged, to be a thing credible in it self.

For if they had this ground, it would be as notorious that these Points of Faith which the Evangelists and the Apostles did not think fit to mention in their Writings; It would I say be as notorious, that they were handed down by the Catholick Church from the Apostles through all Ages to this, as it is, that the Holy Scriptures have been thus conveyed, and are now with this advantage delivered to us. For that which has made the Tradition of the Scriptures so highly credible, above that of other Books, of which there is yet no doubt, is this, that the Vastness of the Concern soon drew in People of All Nations and Languages to consider them, insomuch that they have all along engaged Mankind, and found more business for the World, and have been more Read, oftner Transcribed, and Translated, than any other Books ever were, or in all likelihood ever will be. So that as our Twentieth Article says, *The Church is the Keeper and the Witness of Holy Writ*; for indeed she hath kept the Scriptures, which we can run up from Age to Age, till we come to the Apostles, and this with very little and inconsiderable Exception through the Vast Body of the Catholick Church.

But now if there were Points of Saving Faith not written by the Evangelists or the Apostles, but committed to the Report of the Church; these were of no less importance than the Scriptures them-

themſelves, and had for ſome time at leaſt been guarded and inculcated every where, as being no leſs neceſſary for ſalvation, than any thing that was written.

Nay, I cannot but add, that there had been a univerſally greater care to ſupport the Profeſſion of theſe, than of the written Articles: Inaſmuch as the common ſence of mankind agrees to this, that *Records* are a more certain means of conveying Truth to Poſterity, than *Report*. And men would be more apt to believe that the Apoſtles ſaid what themſelves wrote, than that they ſaid what they did not write, but which others reported from their mouths. And therefore by how much more the Tradition of unwritten Doctrines was in danger to loſe its credit, than the Tradition of written Doctrines, ſo much more care had been taken to make the Tradition of the former as loud as Thunder. We ſhould have met with them in every page, as I may ſay, of the Fathers next after the Apoſtles, and the like in thoſe that ſucceeded them. Nay, when it was obſerved, after the deceaſe of all the Apoſtles, that ſome points neceſſary to ſalvation had not been touched in their Writings; it could hardly have been otherwiſe, but that the Guides of the Church ſhould on purpoſe have written Books to ſecure the conveyance of them to Poſterity, and have declared to the World as unanimouſly and formally as was poſſible; that whereas the Writings of the Inſpired Preachers and Publiſhers of their Religion, which give ſufficient Authority to ſome Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, *viz.* to thoſe that are written, have not yet expreſſed others that are of equal neceſſity to be believed,

lieved, ſince they were but orally delivered as ſuch, by the Apoſtles to the Church; it is hereby made known to all Ages to come, that Theſe and Theſe are Doctrines of this ſort, that Poſterity may have no reaſon to doubt what they are. This indeed, or ſomething like this, had been a likely Foundation of leaving unwritten Articles to the Evidence of Tradition. At leaſt, conſidering the danger of loſing them in proceſs of time, becauſe they wanted the Authority of the Inſpired Writings, Chriſtian People were to be the more carefully inſtructed in them, and they ſhould have been taught to profeſs them every-where in their ſolemn Aſſemblies for the ſervice of God. Which courſe, if it had been taken, we ſhould have had theſe Articles conveyed down to us in the *Antient Creeds* and *Formularies*, which indeed had given them a Reverend Authority; which method has been carefully obſerved, as to thoſe Articles which are of later date, and have been introduc'd by the Church of *Rome*. Witneſs that Profeſſion of Faith publiſhed by *Pius* the Fourth, in purſuance of the Decrees of the Council of *Trent*; where to the *Nicene* Creed, amongſt other Novelties, the profeſſion of theſe is added.

'I profeſs, that a true, proper, and propitiatory Sa-'crifice for the Living and the Dead, is offered to 'God in the *Maſs*; and that in the moſt holy Sacra-'ment of the *Euchariſt*, there is really and ſubſtantial-'ly the Body and Bloud, together with the Soul and 'Divinity of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*; and that there is 'a converſion made of the whole ſubſtance of Bread 'into his Body, and of the whole ſubſtance of Wine 'into his Bloud; which converſion the Catholick 'Church

'Church calls *Tranſubſtantiation.* I acknowledge alſo, 'that whole and entire Chriſt, and the true Sacra-'ment, is received under one kind onely. I firmly 'hold that there is a Purgatory, and that the Souls 'detained there, are helped by the Prayers of the 'Faithful; and likewiſe, that the Saints reigning with '*Chriſt*, are to be venerated and called upon, *&c.*

Theſe and the reſt of the moſt notorious Innovations in Faith eſtabliſhed by that Council, were thought fit to be inſerted into the Creed, for their better ſecurity. And ſince it was reſolved, that theſe things ſhould for the future go for a part of that Faith, without which we muſt not hope to be ſaved, it was diſcreetly done to take this care of them, that at laſt they ſhould be found in a Creed. Onely we ſay, this care comes too late to ſatisfie us that the Apoſtles delivered theſe points to the Church. For ſince we cannot find them in the Scriptures, we have reaſon to think, that a more early care of this kind had been taken, if they had indeed come from the Apoſtles by unwritten Tradition. And we confeſs, they had then been delivered to us with great Authority, though we had wanted them in the Scriptures. But that there ſhould be unwritten Traditions of ſuch vaſt conſequence, and neither the Creed of the *Greek* nor of the *Latin* Church make the leaſt mention of them: That the principal written Traditions, which in compariſon needed it not, ſhould be put together into a Creed; but that the unwritten ones which needed it very much, ſhould be quite left out, and never thought of to that purpoſe, till about fifteen hundred years after: That the People ſhould be no better inſtructed, and

and that the Guides of the People, the Fathers of the Church, ſhould be ſo careleſs as to lay no ſtreſs upon theſe things in their Writings! This is a wonder above all wonders; or rather it is very ſtrange, that men ſhould now adays pretend the Evidence of Tradition for certain points of Faith not written by the Evangeliſts, or any of the Apoſtles, or any Inſpired Preachers of the Goſpel, where there is not the leaſt appearance of Evidence for it.

But when I conſider farther for what Doctrines ſake it is, that the Evidence of Tradition is pretended, *viz.* for the ſake of thoſe Doctrines which make the latter half of the New *Trent*-Creed; I am, I confeſs, ſomething amazed to ſee how croſs the Underſtandings of ſome men lye, or rather what power Intereſt has, to make them affirm things not onely without Evidence, but againſt it. For we find not onely no mention of theſe pretended Points of Faith, not onely a deep ſilence concerning them through thoſe Ages of the Church, wherein if in any we might expect the greateſt ſincerity, that is for three hundred and fifty years after *Chriſt*; but very many things palpably inconſiſtent with them. Which being conſidered, the ſofteſt thing I can ſay is, that 'tis a deſire theſe Points ſhould be believed, rather than any good reaſon for it, which inclines any man to think that there is another Rule of Faith beſides the Scriptures, which ſtands upon Evidence of Tradition, as well as the Scriptures. And what reaſon I have thus to conclude, will perhaps yet more plainly appear, if we conſider theſe following things.

I.

1. If it were a doubtful Point, whether the New Articles of the *Trent* Creed were to be found in the Writings of the Fathers, or not, this I think were enough to overthrow the pretence to ſuch an Evidence of Tradition in their behalf as ſo weighty a matter requires. I know what vaſt Pains have been taken to find theſe Traditionary Doctrines in the Fathers, what Volumes have been written for this end; and with what confidence *All* the Fathers have been ſaid to be on that ſide. But 'tis not by what confident Men ſay, but by what reaſonable Men judg, that the Victory in this Cauſe will go at laſt. When once a Church has got into vaſt Temporal Power and Greatneſs, and her Favours are to go to none but thoſe that merit them, by ſerving her Cauſe againſt all other Churches in the World; when her Servants are both great and many; they can ſay thoſe things without bluſhing, which a Man, deſtitute of ſuch Supports and Advantages, would never be bold enough to ſay, if he were not alſo deſtitute of Modeſty or Diſcretion. It is no hard matter to meet in the ſeveral Volumes of the Fathers, with ſuch Paſſages as may be wreſted to a Senſe which they never dream'd of, and applied to the Service of a Cauſe, which in ſeveral Nations, has drawn together ſo many Men as are able to keep one another in countenance. If a Father does but beſtow a Complement upon the Biſhop of *Rome*, or upon the Ch. of *Rome*, this ſhall be enough to make *Him* the Biſhop of all Biſhops, and *Her* the Miſtreſs of all Churches. And let there be never ſo many Paſſages on the other ſide, plainly aſſerting the Independence of other Biſhops upon him, and the Independence of other Churches upon her; a Controverſy may be for ſome time ſupported on the weak ſide, by convenient Wit and Boldneſs. If the Fathers ſometimes ſpeak very mag-

nificently of the holy Myſtery of the *Euchariſt*, with reſpect to the Son of God, whoſe Sacrifice for us is there repreſented, and commemorated; the Fathers are preſently brought in for ſaying nothing leſs, than that the Subſtance of Bread and Wine is changed into the Subſtance of Chriſt's Body and Blood; and that he is as properly offered in Sacrifice to God in every *Maſs*, as when he offered up himſelf upon the Croſs for us. But as to theſe and the other controverted Articles, we profeſs that we cannot ſo much as find any Footſteps of them in the Primitive Fathers; but, as I ſaid before, we meet with many things that are irreconcilably repugnant to them: Which makes it neceſſary for us to conclude that there is no Evidence of Tradition, that the Fathers received theſe unwritten Articles of Faith from the Apoſtles, which we are *Anathematized* for not receiving from the late Council of *Trent*. If there were Evidence of Tradition for the *Supremacy of the Pope*, How is it poſſible ſuch a Book ſhould be written to ſhew the contrary, as Dr. *Barrow's*? If there were Evidence of Tradition for the Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation*, how could the late Diſcourſes againſt it have ſhewn that the Fathers knew nothing of it? If there were Evidence of Tradition for the *Worſhip of the Bleſſed Virgin and the Saints*; certainly the late Diſcourſe againſt that, in *Anſwer to Monſieur* de Meaux's *Appeal to the fourth Age*, has abuſed the Ancient Fathers, and moſt groſly miſrepreſented them; and yet if any Man examines the matter, he will go near to find it otherwiſe. I might mention later Diſcourſes of the ſame kind upon other Subjects, which at leaſt carry a notable appearance of Truth, and for which our Adverſaries are in Arrears to us. Now if there were Evidence of Tradition for their ſide of the Queſtions,

it

it were the eaſieſt thing in the World to expoſe theſe Books to publick ſhame; becauſe if they do not effectually ſhew the contrary, they are upon the matter made up of groſs Deceits. For all wiſe Men know that Evidence of Tradition is a notorious thing: So notorious, that whoever inſiſts upon the pretence to it for that which has it not, muſt needs be led away with ſtrange prejudice: but he that denies it to that which has, will hardly eſcape being notorious himſelf, for want of Honeſty, or for want of Wit. And therefore, if Evidence of Tradition were againſt us in theſe Points, our Divines could not pretend to argue againſt them out of the Fathers ſo as they do, without notoriout falſifying the Teſtimonies of the Fathers; which if they were ſo void of all Modeſty as to do, yet at leaſt I can hardly imagin our Adverſaries ſo void of common Diſcretion as to ſuffer them to do it, without making it appear from one end of a Diſcourſe of this kind to the other, that indeed they do ſo. Perhaps the force of what I ſay will be better apprehended by thoſe that are in this Cauſe either with us, or againſt us, if we lay it in another caſe. Suppoſe any Man ſhould be ſo hardy as to maintain, that the Scriptures of the New Teſtament were written not above thirteen hundred Years ſince; or at leaſt, that they were of little or no Authority in the Church for the firſt three hundred and fifty Years after Chriſt. I would fain know what he would get by it, but to be accounted a very mad, as well as a very wicked Perſon for the ſake of ſuch an Attempt: But ſurely he could not ſhake the Aſſurance that any underſtanding and prudent Perſon has of the contrary. Now the plain reaſon is this, becauſe it is as evident through all the Writings of thoſe Fathers, that they all received the Scriptures as derived from

the Apoſtles themſelves, as any matter of Fact before our times can be. But I ſay, if theſe unwritten Points, which we are *Anathematized* for not receiving, ſtood upon Evidence of Tradition too, we had found the Fathers delivering them as unqueſtionably, as we find them delivering the Authority of the Scriptures; and in all probability with ſomething greater Care and Solicitude too, and that becauſe they wanted the Authority of the Scriptures. And then it were as ridiculous an Attempt to go about to overthrow the Tradition of the one, as of the other, and nothing could be more eaſie than to ſhew it. For when there is Evidence of Tradition for a thing, it cannot bear any colour for a Diſpute that there is no ſuch Evidence. Men may wrangle for ſome time, and pretend Tradition for that which has it not, but no wrangling will ſerve the turn to keep any Cauſe in countenance, that ſtands upon the denial of evident Tradition.

2. The next thing I conſider with reference to the *Romaniſts* pretending Tradition for their unwritten Articles, is, that they reject ſome Points which have incomparably a better colour for a pretence to Tradition, than thoſe for which they pretend it. I ſhall inſtance only in the *Millenary* Doctrine, which ſome of the Fathers do not only poſitively aſſert, but one of them makes it the Belief of all Orthodox *Chriſtians*, and joyns it with the Belief of the Reſurrection. Now if the like could be found in behalf of any one of the new Articles of the late Creed; I do not well know how we could have been able to bear up againſt the Confidence of our Adverſaries, who without any ſuch Teſtimonies, as the *Millenary* Doctrine hath, are ever and anon crying out againſt us, that we go againſt all the Fathers. And yet themſelves can ſee no Evidence of

Juſt. Mar. Diab. cum Try. p. 307. Par.

of Tradition for this Doctrine, but wholly reject it; in which we cannot but commend them, becauſe even that Teſtimony which this Doctrine hath from the Fathers, will not amount to an Argument that the Apoſtles delivered it, as the Fathers did. But then much leſs ought thoſe Doctrines to be obtruded under this pretence, for which there is by no means ſuch colour of Tradition as there is for this. And therefore, it may well amaze a Man that expects nothing but equal dealing from all Churches, that thoſe *Chriſtians* who reject the one, ſhould require us to receive the other; and that they ſhould pretend another Rule of Faith beſides the Scriptures, which ſtands upon the Evidence of Tradition, when they make that Doctrine to be *Heretical*, which bids for it with an hundred times more probability, than any one of thoſe which they would eſtabliſh upon it. But then,

3. It is clear beyond all reaſonable doubt, that no Tradition for unwritten Points of Faith can be made out through the Writings of the Primitive Fathers; ſince they all acknowledg the Scriptures to be the Rule of Faith. And tho ſometimes they do appeal to univerſal Tradition, and the Agreement of the Apoſtolical Churches; yet thus they appealed always in behalf of thoſe Doctrines, which were clearly founded upon Scripture, not of unwritten Points. They uſed divers Arguments to confound the monſtrous *Hereticks*, that ſtarted up in the beginning of the Church; and ſince ſome of theſe *Hereticks* pretended a ſecret Tradition from the Apoſtles, it was one very proper way of ſilencing them, to oppoſe a notorious Tradition, in which all the Apoſtolical Churches agreed, to their ſecret one. And becauſe the Holy Scriptures themſelves ſtand upon Tradition, therefore the ſeveral Points of

of Faith which they contain, ſtand upon it too, and may at any time be enforced by it. So that when we meet with an Appeal to Tradition, in *Irenæus* and *Tertullian*, it were a great miſtake to imagine that they ſuppoſed another Rule of Faith beſides the Scriptures; ſince the Tradition which they ſo juſtly pretended, was for the Doctrines of the Scripture: and it is likewiſe very plain, that they added no other Rule to the Scriptures, nor thought there was any thing neceſſary to be believed in order to Salvation, which is not therein contained. Which is a manifeſt Argument, that unleſs the Fathers were but Novices, a Tradition of unwritten Doctrines cannot be made out from the Fathers. For what could be more abſurd, than that they ſhould at once agree in the making the Scriptures the only Rule of Faith, and all the while agree in delivering Points neceſſary to Salvation which are not in the Scripture? Here therefore I had been obliged to ſhew ſome part of that *Cloud of Witneſſes*, wherewith we are encompaſſed, in maintaining that the Fathers took the Holy Scriptures for the Rule of their Faith; but that this Point is made out ſo learnedly and ſo plainly in the late *Vindication of the Anſwer to ſome late Papers*, from *pag.* 40. to *pag.* 50. that I will make bold to ſay 'tis done for ever, as they will find, one after another, who will try to undo it again, if we have any reaſon to hope that they will ſo much as try it. And this will be enough to ſatisfy all reaſonable Perſons, that it muſt be impoſſible to make out a Tradition of unwritten Points of Faith by the Fathers, that they made the Holy Writings of the Bible *the Rule of their Faith.*

Seeing therefore there is no Evidence of the leaſt care in the Primitive Church to preſerve unwritten Points of Faith; ſeeing no ſuch things appears in the Ancient

Ancient Creeds, or in the Books of the Fathers; ſeeing this had been as neceſſary as the loud and conſtant Tradition of the Scriptures, if any ſuch unwritten Points there had been; and ſince notwithſtanding there is not the leaſt appearance of ſo notorious a Tradition of ſuch Points; ſeeing alſo the Doctrines for which ſuch Tradition is pretended, have no Footſteps in the Writings of the Church for the firſt Ages, and that many of them are directly repugnant to what the truly Primitive Fathers taught; ſeeing that if it were but a doubtful and diſputable Point, whether the Fathers witneſſed to ſuch Doctrines or not, they would ſtill want the Evidence of Tradition: Since they who pretend Tradition for theſe Doctrines, reject other Points, which there is ſome colour to pretend Tradition for, incomparably more than for thoſe which they would obtrude upon us. Laſtly, ſeeing that the Fathers, through whom the Tradition of ſuch Doctrines muſt neceſſarily be derived to us, did unanimouſly take the Holy Scriptures for the Rule of their Faith; and that they had notoriouſly contradicted themſelves, if at the ſame time they had ſucceſſively delivered Points of Faith which are not in the Scriptures. All theſe things, I ſay, being taken together, do amount to little leſs than a perfect Demonſtration, that there is no ſupplemental Rule of Faith to be added to the Scriptures, which can be ſhewn to ſtand upon *Evidence of Tradition*: which was the firſt thing to be ſhewn. But,

Secondly; If it be ſaid that our Obligation to receive another Rule of Faith, which muſt be added to that of the Scriptures, does ariſe from *the Teſtimony of the Scriptures themſelves*, which we have already upon good reaſon received as *a Rule of Faith*. I deſire theſe following things may be conſidered.

1. That

1. That this pretence does make the Scriptures to be the ſupreme Rule of Faith; ſince if the Church, whether the Catholick, or ſome particular Church, whether one Man or more in it do claim to be believed in unwritten Doctrines, upon the account of his or their Declaration of them: the Reaſon hereof is at laſt reſolved this way into the Authority of the Scriptures. Therefore,

2. If Evidence of Scripture be pretended for ſuch Church-Authority: for inſtance, that the Church in Communion with St. *Peter*'s Chair is to be believed by all, in all that ſhe teaches; then before we can be rationally led into this belief concerning that Church, we muſt firſt be ſuppoſed to believe the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, and either allowed to underſtand ſome part of the Scriptures, or at leaſt enabled to underſtand them by ſuch Diſcourſes as one Man may aſſiſt another with, without pretending Authority from God to oblige him to receive his Interpretation, becauſe 'tis *His*. If therefore the *Romaniſts* will keep cloſely and diſtinctly to this Argument from Scripture, for another Rule of Faith beſides the Scripture, we deſire not fairer Adverſaries. But if, whilſt we argue with them, and they with us, from Authority of Scripture, they preſs us to receive ſuch Interpretations, as they cannot oblige us to receive otherwiſe than upon an Authority that is yet to be proved; nothing can be more abſurd and ſenſeleſs, ſince this is to prove the thing in Queſtion, by ſuppoſing it to be out of Queſtion.

Wherefore as to theſe Texts following: *Thou art* Peter, *and upon this Rock I will build my Church.* And,
Matth. 16. 18. *Tell it unto the Church.* And, *Lo, I am with you alway,*
Chap. 18. 17. *even unto the end of the World.* And, *I will pray the Fa-*
Chap. 28. 20. *ther, and he ſhall give you another Comforter, that he may*
Joh. 14. 16, 17. *abide*

abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth. And, *Feed my Sheep:* which are the common places upon which they would eſtabliſh an Eccleſiaſtical Authority, which, being infallible, is to be believed in all things, and fix that Authority in the Church of *Rome*. The meaning of theſe Texts, I ſay, is to be diſputed upon Principles common to them and to us, whereof the Infallibility of their Church is none, becauſe it yet remains to be proved by theſe Authorities. But then, Joh. 21. 17.

3. We need not a more convincing Proof, that there is no Teſtimony of Scripture to be produced with any colour, to make the Definitions of that Church a Rule of Faith, when they can produce no better than theſe, which neither in Words expreſs any ſuch thing, nor by any reaſonable Conſequence imply it. Becauſe *Chriſt* ſaid, *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock, &c.* therefore *Peter* was that *Rock*, and not the Faith which he confeſſed. Therefore *Peter* was that *only Rock*, excluſively to all the other *Apoſtles*. Therefore *Peter* was *not that only Rock*, excluſively to all, or to any of his *Succeſſors*, but one Rock was to be piled upon another to the end of the World, for the Church to be built upon. And when our Lord ſaid, *Thou art Peter*, he ſaid it in effect to Pope *Hildebrand*, and to *John* the 22*d*, as well as to the Apoſtle. And yet theſe are not half the Preſumptions upon this place that muſt be ſwallowed before we come to the Concluſion, that the *Roman* Church is to be believed in all her Definitions of Faith. Becauſe alſo *Chriſt* made ſuch and ſuch Promiſes to all the Apoſtles, therefore every one of them were made to their Succeſſors to the World's end; and becauſe he made certain Promiſes to them upon Conditions, therefore they were meant to their Succeſſors, whether they performed the Conditions or no. But why ſhould I ſo much

much as intimate the miſerable Inconſequence of their reaſoning from Scripture, which has been ſo often, and ſo unanſwerably ſhewn already? For inſtance; there is no place of Scripture more dear to them, than *Thou art Peter*, for bringing down Supremacy and Infallibility to the *Roman* Church. Now let any Man take the two Sermons preached laſt St. *Peter*'s Day, upon theſe words, one by Dr. *Godden* in favour of the *Roman* Church, the other by a Rev. Divine of our Church, and compare them together; let a Papiſt do it, and I am reaſonably aſſured, that if he be not perfectly convinced, he will yet at leaſt be ſomething aſhamed.

Beſides all this, the Fathers never underſtood theſe Texts in that Senſe which the preſent Church of *Rome* takes them in; of which this, without producing their Interpretations, is an unanſwerable proof, that they ſet up no viſible Infallible Judg of Controverſies in the Church, that they made the Scriptures the Rule of Faith, and knew nothing of an Authority that could oblige the Church to take other Points of Faith, which are not to be found in the Scriptures.

We have been told that there muſt be an Infallible Church, and an Eccleſiaſtical Authority obliging all to ſubmit with the Obedience of Faith, becauſe it is ſo convenient that thus it ſhould be. I would ask theſe wiſe Men, Whether it had not been as convenient every whit, that the Scripture ſhould have ſaid in plain terms, God will in every Age provide an Infallible Guide of Controverſies? Had it not yet been more convenient to have ſaid, This Infallible Guide ſhall be found nowhere but in the Communion of St. *Peter*'s Chair? And yet more, that St. *Peter*'s Chair ſhould be fix'd at *Rome*? And more convenient ſtill, that either the Pope himſelf, or a Council by him confirmed, ſhould be that

that Infallible Guide? And moſt of all, that it ſhould have been added too, that the whole Flock of *Chriſt* ſhould be for ever bound to ſubmit to the Definitions of that Guide in Controverſies, how contrary ſoever his Definitions might ſeem to be to the Doctrines that were taught by the Apoſtles, and contain'd in their Writings? If God had meant all that Authority to the *Roman* Church which it claims, and that this Authority ſhould be evident from the Scriptures: No Man I think will deny, that ſome ſuch Declarations as I have expreſſed, had been very convenient. And it ſeems to us that it had not been only convenient, but very neceſſary that a Point of ſo vaſt a Conſequence, ſhould have been as clearly expreſſed, as any Truth in the Bible.

But we leave it to our Adverſaries to argue in that manner, as if God muſt have done every thing, which to them it ſeems convenient that he ſhould have done. It ſufficeth us, that God hath not obliged us to believe that Authority upon the Teſtimony of Scripture, for which we cannot find the leaſt Evidence of Scripture, though it is a matter of that moment, if it had been true, that it required the greateſt Evidence of all. And tho we do not believe the Fathers to have been infallible Interpreters of the Scripture, yet we are reaſonably certain, that this ſame viſible Infallible Judg, is ſo far from being plainly viſible in the Scriptures, that he is not to be found there at all, becauſe the Fathers could find him there no more than we.

To pretend that we do not ſee the Truth, becauſe we are blinded with Prejudice or Intereſt, is to give us occaſion to ſay, that the ſtrength of Prejudice and Intereſt will be preſumed to lie on that ſide where the Arguments are weakeſt. For our own parts we cannot but

appeal to God for the ſincerity of our Intentions, and to the World for the ſolidity of our Reaſonings.

And as for thoſe Texts which are produced in favour of another Rule of Faith beſides the Scripture, *viz.* a Church-Authority that in all things of this kind is to conclude our Judgment; we may alſo appeal to our Adverſaries themſelves, whether they put any great Confidence in them; ſince 'tis ſo notorious that they are wont to argue from theſe places of Scripture at laſt, as interpreted by the Church: Which, beſides the ſhamefulneſs of proving a thing by it ſelf, is a very ſhrewd Argument that themſelves do not think theſe places are plain for their purpoſe, inaſmuch as they need an infallible Authority to ſatisfy us that they are ſo. For I cannot perſwade my ſelf to the contrary, but that if a Propoſition be reaſonably plain, I need no Infallible Judg to ſatisfy me about the meaning of it.

Thus I have ſhewn the Holy Scripture to be the only Rule of Faith, inaſmuch as it has no partner that can juſtly pretend either *Evidence of Tradition*, or *Teſtimony of Scripture.*

As for that Objection which our Adverſaries commonly make againſt all Diſcourſes of this kind, That a Rule without a Judg can never end Controverſies, but will rather encreaſe them; that while every Man judges for himſelf of the Senſe of the Scripture, infinite Errors and Diſcords will follow; that if for the avoiding of this Miſchief, there be an Authority ſet up in the Church to interpret the Letter of the Scripture, then the Interpretation of the Judg is of neceſſity a Rule, as well as the Scripture: but if there be no ſuch Authority, all things muſt run into Confuſion and Diſorder. I ſay, all this has been ſufficiently anſwered over

over and over; and therefore I ſhall ſay the leſs to it here. Now,

Altho it be not only every Man's Right, but Duty alſo, to inquire into the Truth, and it be impoſſible but that he muſt judg for himſelf at laſt; yet this does by no means void the Authority of Spiritual Guides and Governours, to lead the People committed to their Charge into the Knowledg of the Truth. For inſtance, as in a matter of ſo great concern as the true Interpretation of Scripture, I am bound to uſe my own Judgment as well as I can; ſo for the ſame reaſon, I am bound to uſe all the helps I can procure, but eſpecially to hearken to the Governours of that Church whereof I am a Member; which I may certainly do without being obliged to follow them right or wrong, unleſs a Man muſt of neceſſity put out his own Eyes, becauſe he hopes that he has a good Guide. That all Confuſion muſt needs follow the liberty of private Inquiry and Judgment, is a thing that no Declamations will ever perſwade me to believe, when I know the contrary by my own Experience. I was baptized and educated in this Church of *England* to the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity; the Church laid before me, as it does before all, her Doctrine and Worſhip, and has given me means and liberty to examine all by the Scriptures, and by common Principles of Religion. I have done this as well as I can, and am mightily confirmed in that Faith and Profeſſion, which I took up firſt upon her Authority. Now I will not preſume to ſay that the Church is obliged to me for taking this pains; but I muſt confeſs that I am not a little obliged to the Church for two things, both for inſtructing me in the ſincere Truth of Religion, and for allowing me the liberty and the means to ſatisfy my ſelf that ſhe has done ſo;

for

for whether she had taught me a Doctrine that would bear Examination, it had been impossible for me to know, if I had not examined it. And I am so sure, that I am not the less, but the more fast in the Communion of this Church, and in submission to her Authority, for having used this liberty, That a Man may harangue all day long about the Mischiefs of this Liberty, and when he has done, I shall need to do no more, but to oppose my own Experience to his Flourishes; and it shall remain true, that a Church which teaches the Truth sincerely, can do her self no greater right, than to afford all manner of means and opportunities to her Members to examine what she teaches. This indeed, as well as other good things, may be abused; but they that do abuse it, shall have the worst on't; but the Church is clear of all blame: and what our Lord said of *Wisdom*, will be true of the Church, that *she shall be justified of her Children*. I do not deny that this Liberty is very much for the disadvantage of a Church in one case, *i. e.* if she teaches Errors instead of Truths, and for *Doctrines the Commandments of Men*; for when this comes once to be fully discovered, the Discovery makes such a Wound in her, as cannot be healed without a Reformation, but otherwise she shall linger of it till she dies. And therefore this Liberty of private Judgment, and enquiring into the Truth by the Scriptures, lays a mighty Obligation upon all Churches to be honest, I mean upon their Spiritual Guides; especially since whether they give this Liberty or not, it will be taken more or less; Not all the Terrors of the World, nor Fraud joyned to Force can totally suppress it. And when it has once got abroad, the more Art and Violence is used to confine it again, it will break out at length the more irresistibly, and

bear

bear down all before it. Truth has a natural Power over the wiſe and the honeſt, and this is a holding Intereſt, and will be a good one a thouſand Years hence, if the World laſts ſo long. But Error, altho it may be popular for ſome time, and for no little time too, is yet really loſing ground when it ſeems to gain it, becauſe 'tis ſtill ſpending upon a Stock that will not always laſt, upon Artifice and Worldly Power, upon Violence and all Deceiveableneſs of Unrighteouſneſs, which at laſt will make it odious to all that part of the World that has been impoſed upon. And when once to the native beauty and power of Faith, there is added a full view of all thoſe ways by which Error has laboured to ſuppreſs it; Error will be found to have undone it ſelf, and all the World will be more perfectly enlightned by thoſe very methods which have been uſed to keep it in Darkneſs and Ignorance. But that Church which is built upon the Truth, is built upon a Rock; and he that feels himſelf upon ſo firm a Foundation, will not lightly be removed from his own Stedfaſtneſs. But how 'tis poſſible for him to know that he is ſo eſtabliſhed, without the liberty of private Judgment, I would gladly know from any Man that pretends the contrary; and how the liberty of private Judgment can be allowed, where the free uſe of the Holy Scriptures is denied, I would alſo know; and deſire only, that he who would make me underſtand and believe what he has to ſay upon this matter, would be very ſure before-hand, that he underſtands and believes it himſelf.

In the mean time who can help it, if this liberty alſo be abuſed to the ſupporting of Faction and Error by ſome or other; who, I ſay, can help it, but thoſe that are guilty, and thoſe who for ends beſt known to themſelves, do under-hand feed thoſe Miſtakes and Paſſions

Paſſions of others which create Diſturbances amongſt us? But they who for this Reaſon would have the Laity abſolutely to depend upon the Clergy, talk as if a Church were inſtituted to ſend Men to Heaven, as a Shepherd drives his Flocks to Paſture, without the uſe of any Reaſon or Underſtanding of their own. Was ſo excellent a Religion as that of our Lord *Jeſus* revealed from Heaven, was it contrived by the Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs, into ſo heavenly a good Deſign, and eſtabliſh'd upon ſuch ſure Proofs and Teſtimony of Divine Revelation? Are all theſe things contained in the Scriptures? And has God given us Reaſon to apprehend them in ſuch meaſure, as that we cannot but thereupon admire and adore his infinitely wiſe and good Providence? And yet muſt we be reſtrained from daring ſo much as to look into the proper Grounds of this Faith, as if either it had no Reaſons, or we no Underſtanding? If that be true which the Biſhop of St. *Mark* ſuppoſed in one of the Convocations at the Council of *Trent*, any Religion I think might have ſerved a Layman's turn as well as Chriſtianity. *The Canons*, ſaid he, *determine that Laicks have no Authority to command, but neceſſarily to obey; and that the Council ought to decree, that Seculars ought humbly to obey that Doctrine of Faith which is given them by the Church, without diſputing or thinking further of it.* It ſeems then that the Layman's whole Duty, is, that of abſolute Obedience to the Prieſt, and he has no more to do but to receive the Doctrine of Faith given him by the Church without *thinking further of it.* But at this rate the Layman ought to know no difference between the *Chriſtian* and the *Mahometan* Creed, if the Church ſhould think fit to change the one for the other. For I cannot underſtand why the *Mahometan* Creed ſhould not do a Layman's buſineſs as well

History of the Council of *Trent*, p. 141.

well as the *Apoſtle*'s Creed, if he is to receive his Faith from the Prieſt, *without diſputing or thinking further on it.* 'Tis true, there is a great deal of difference between the two Creeds; the one is altogether true, and half of the other is falſe; but 'tis not my buſineſs, who am but a Layman, to inquire into the Reaſons that make the difference, for I am to know but one Reaſon of my Faith, *viz.* that *'tis given me by the Church*; and this Reaſon will undoubtedly ſerve for this Creed, or for that Creed, or for any Creed whatſoever. It has ſerved for the bringing in as many more Articles into the Creed as were there before; and it may ſerve as well to turn out all the old ones, as it has ſerved to bring in the new. For we are *humbly to obey that Doctrine of Faith which is given us by the Church, without diſputing or thinking farther of it.*

To a Church that has cauſe for this proceeding, I know no Miſchief that can be more undoing, than the liberty of private Judgment: But to a Church that has no cauſe to fear the uſe of this liberty, nothing can be more for her Advantage, than that all Perſons be not only permitted, but perſwaded to examine the Terms of her Communion with all poſſible freedom and diligence according to their Abilities; and to give them all manner of aſſiſtance towards it, as the Clergy of this Church have done, to their immortal Credit, by their Sermons and their Writings, which are ſo inſtructing, that all indifferent Perſons may obſerve they would not envy the Laity, if they were wiſer than their Teachers.

As for that Objection againſt our Church, which is of late ſo much inſiſted upon by ſome, That notwithſtanding the liberty ſhe gives to private Chriſtians to examine her Doctrines by the Scriptures, ſhe yet pe-

remptorily requires the Profeſſion of that Faith which ſhe teaches, and Conformity to her Rules of Worſhip: there is nothing in it to ſurpriſe any Man, but the intolerable Vanity of the Objections. For this is ſo far from being unreaſonable, that for the ſame reaſon that ſhe does the one, ſhe may and ought to do the other; that is, becauſe ſhe is certain that the Conditions of her Communion are juſtifiable to the whole World, therefore ſhe ſhould neither fear to inſiſt upon them, nor to provoke all Perſons to the Examination of them by any proper Methods whatſoever.

This Objection, however runs a little croſs to the other, that the Liberty our Church gives muſt needs cauſe Diſorder and Confuſion. For why there muſt needs be Diſorder where a Church's Faith is fixed, and a Form of Worſhip eſtabliſhed, and Conformity required, and no juſt cauſe of Offence given, I cannot underſtand, unleſs it be becauſe it muſt needs be, that ſome Men will be very unreaſonable, and others will be very wicked after the beſt care is taken to direct them in their Duty, and oblige them to it. If they of the *Roman* Church can tell how to prevent this infallibly, 'tis a Secret which they have as yet kept to themſelves. For our own parts, we are altogether ignorant of any way that ſhall make it impoſſible for Men that are endued with Free-will, to abuſe it, whether by making wrong Judgment, or a wrong Choice. Our Church hath fixed Terms of Communion, which are truly Catholick, and leaves every one to judg for himſelf, whether they be ſo or not, affording to every one the liberty of uſing all means that they can in order to the making a right Judgment, and therefore of uſing the Scriptures, which are not only the beſt in themſelves, but which alſo come within the compaſs of the Abilities

ties and Leiſure of all, more or leſs. We are to uſe the liberty of judging for our ſelves by theſe means, under this Conſideration, that we are to be accountable for it at the day of Judgment. If the loſing of this Church's Communion were all the Penalty we are in danger of by refuſing her Terms, this were but a ſmall Obligation to conſider well, whether there was juſt cauſe to refuſe them or not. But when the Penalty of making a wrong Judgment againſt the Church will be no leſs than Condemnation at the laſt day, we think reaſonable Men cannot lie under a greater Obligation to look to it, that they proceed in their ſearch after Truth with all care and ſincerity. This is the Proviſion that God hath made for the maintaining of Truth and Peace in his Church; that Governours cannot abuſe their Authority in commanding, nor the People their Liberty of judging whether the Command can be obeyed with a good Conſcience, but at the peril of their Souls. Notwithſtanding which Proviſion, there are *Schiſms* in the Church; which we cannot much wonder at, becauſe God hath not thought fit to provide againſt it by means that would infallibly ſecure Peace and Truth, any more than to ſecure the Piety and Vertue of every Believer by irreſiſtible Cauſes. As for thoſe that impute the Diſorders and Schiſms of the Church to the liberty of judging by the Scriptures, which we allow; I would be glad to know what means they are provided with to aſcertain the Unity of Communion. They tell us often, and we are even nauſeated with the repetition of ſo frivolous a Pretence, That God has left an Infallible Judg of Controverſies amongſt them, to whom we ought to ſubmit. But notwithſtanding this pretended Proviſion, is it not apparent that there are flagrant Controverſies in the Chriſtian

World, and oppoſite Communions of Churches one againſt the other? Do we ſee the Effects of ſuch a Proviſion in the Church? Or rather, is it not evident that God hath not provided a means of ending Controverſies, or rather of preventing them, that would infallibly prevail, becauſe Controverſies are not prevented, nor ended, but have for many Ages been kept up in the Church to the ſcandal of the World? But then we are told they would be ended, if all Men would ſubmit to the Infallible Judg. Which is as much as to ſay, that an Infallible Judg is not an Infallible Means of ending Controverſies, becauſe Men may chuſe whether they will ſubmit to him or not. So that this very Pretence ſuppoſes that God hath not left an abſolute, but only a conditional Proviſion againſt Schiſms; that is to ſay, if all Men would do their Duty, as they ought and might; which is the very caſe as I left it before. But if there be no Infallible Judg, it cannot be our Duty to ſubmit to one that pretends to be ſo; no, altho if all Men would agree to ſubmit to him, Controverſies would be ended every where. For if nothing elſe were to be regarded but Agreement, I could propound other Expedients, beſides that of ſubmiſſion to an Infallible Judg, which tho they be not very wiſe, would do the buſineſs as well. For inſtance; if all Churches would agree to caſt lots for their Cauſes, and to reſt in the Winner; that would be one Expedient, as effectual as a general Agreement to ſubmit to the Pope, or whoſoever elſe muſt go to make up an Infallible Judg. But if we muſt not ſubmit to ſuch a pretended Judg, till we have a reaſon to believe him to be what he pretends; then, as Mr. *Chillingworth* hath told them, here will be, as there is, no ſmall Controverſy, whether he be ſuch a Judg or not. And if in Concluſion, 'tis no Contro-

Controverſy with me, that he is but a pretender, I may perhaps as ſafely refer my ſelf to the next Man I meet in the Streets, as to him. For 'tis never for any good that Infallibility is pretended where it is not.

Upon the whole matter, I can neither ſee that the free uſe of the Scriptures muſt needs cauſe *Schiſms*, nor that the ſetting up of an Infallible Judg muſt needs prevent them. But I am abundantly convinced, that God has left us no Infallible Judg to determine for us, and that he has left us the Holy Scriptures to be the Rule of our Faith. I make not the leaſt doubt that God, for infinitely wiſe and good Reaſons, has given us theſe means of coming to the knowledg of the Truth, and not the other. I plainly diſcern this to be one, that the Means of Inſtruction, and the Evidence of Truth which God has afforded us, might be a Touch-ſtone to diſtinguiſh between the ſincere and the teachable, between the good and honeſt Heart on the one ſide, and the inſincere and diſhoneſt on the other. And ſure I am, that God has appointed a day of Judgment, in which he will proceed according to that difference, and diſtinguiſh between theſe two, by rewarding the one, and puniſhing the other.

See *Joh.* 8. from *ver.* 42. to *ver.* 48.

It is the *Honour* and the *Duty* of Spiritual Paſtors and Guides to inſtruct us in the true Faith, to conduct us in the true Worſhip of God, to adminiſter the Sacraments to us according to the Goſpel; but they may abuſe their Authority, and *corrupt the Word of God*, as *many* have done. And tho they may be too many and too great to be controuled by Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline; yet God will require it at their hands, and bring them to a ſevere account for abuſing their Truſt.

It is the *Prerogative* and *Duty* of Chriſtian Governours to make Laws for the edifying and well-governing of

of the Church; which Power, if they ſhall abuſe, God will require a ſevere account of them too, tho they are not accountable to Man.

It is the *Priviledg* and the *Duty* of private *Chriſtians* to *ſearch the Scriptures*, to *take heed to the Word* of God, that they may be *ready to give an Anſwer to every Man that asketh a Reaſon of their Hope.* But if any Man through Pride, Luſt, Envy, or any other reſpect, abuſe this Liberty, to the diſhonour of God, and the diſturbance of the Publick Peace; he is liable not only to the Cenſure of the Church, and the Penalties of Secular Laws, but likewiſe to the high Diſpleaſure of Almighty God; and tho he ſhould prove ſo proſperous a Criminal, as to eſcape Juſtice here, yet the All-ſeeing Eye of God will aſſuredly find him out, and puniſh him hereafter.

So that the Goſpel, and the means we have to come to the knowledg of the true Faith, and of what God requires, is a Touch-ſtone for all degrees of Men in the Church; inaſmuch as they are all left to do their ſeveral Duties, according to their ſeveral Truſts that God hath committed to them, with that Aſſiſtance which is ſufficient for honeſt Men, but neither with that *Evidence* nor that *Grace* which cannot poſſibly be reſiſted.

Finally, it is the *Happineſs* of private *Chriſtians*, that the Government of Church or State being no part of their buſineſs, they are to judg for themſelves only; which ſince it is their proper work, and ſince the danger of abuſing their Liberty is ſo great, their care and endeavour rightly to uſe it ought to be as great. Religion is my greateſt Concern, and I am to apply my Underſtanding to it with all Attention and Diligence. For my Inſtruction by the Scriptures, I am to uſe ſuch helps

helps as a prudent Man would uſe for the Interpretation of any other Book, in which he deſires to be skilful. But becauſe my eternal State depends upon my learning that Faith of which the Holy Scriptures are the Rule; I am obliged to be more ſollicitous and careful in the reading of them, than all other Books in the World. As I dare not pervert thoſe places of Scripture which are plain, ſo I am to be afraid leſt I pervert thoſe that are difficult; and in ſo great a Concern I am not to reſt wholly upon ſelf, but for the Reſolution of my Doubts to uſe better Judgments, eſpecially of the Paſtors of the Church. In judging for my ſelf, with reſpect to what is required of me, as I am a Member of this Church, I am to remember that God will judg me for pretending Scripture againſt the juſt and lawful Commands of my Superiours. I am therefore to apply my ſelf to the ſtudy of the Scriptures, under the power of this Reſolution to obey God in the firſt place, and then to obey the Laws of Church and State.

If Power and Authority be not exerciſed in purſuance of thoſe Ends for which it was ordained, but for the advancing of Error and Impiety; I know that we muſt patiently ſubmit to the wiſe Providence of Almighty God, who many times permits this either for our Chaſtiſement or our Trial, but never will utterly forſake us, till we forſake him.

If I find that Truth and Piety are protected by the Laws, I am to bleſs God, and to to thank the Government; remembring what a great Obligation this is upon me to obey both God and Man with all readineſs and chearfulneſs.

But how it is poſſible for me to know the difference between theſe two Caſes, without the liberty of private

vate Judgment, I am not able to comprehend.

I think no body will ſay, that abſolute Obedience to the Commands of Superiours, and receiving Doctrines from them *without diſputing or thinking farther of it*, is an univerſal Duty; for then it would be a Sin in a *Pagan* or *Mahometan* Subject, to *think any farther*, whether the Doctrine which he has received be true or not.

But why it ſhould be no Sin, but a Vertue, for Men that are bred up to a falſe Religion, *to think farther of it*, and that it ſhould be a Vertue, but not a Sin, to examine the true Religion, is, I believe paſt the underſtanding of all wiſe and honeſt Men; eſpecially ſince without Examination a Man can never tell which is true, and which is falſe.

That there ſhould be but one Religion in the World that will bear Examination, and yet that it ſhould be a wicked and miſchievous Preſumption to enter into the Examination of it, or for any Man to exerciſe a private Judgment about it, and to ſearch as far as he is able into the bottome of it, is, I believe, the darkeſt Riddle in the World.

For my own part, I have uſed the liberty of a private Inquirer, and am ſo well ſatisfied with the Reaſons of my Inquiry, and with the Effects of it, that I am very well content both ſhould be made publick, if it be thought convenient by thoſe that have Authority to make them ſo. In which caſe, I ſhall have this Satisfaction at leaſt, that theſe Papers may go for ſome Expreſſion of that Gratitude which I owe to the Church of *England*, for the Benefits I have received in her Communion.

I am in the higheſt degree ſenſible of theſe amongſt many other Obligations which ſhe has laid upon me.

That

That ſhe has not gone about to overwhelm me with a pretence to an Infallible Authority in deciding Controverſies of Faith, but ſincerely and generouſly laid down that Truth before me, which needs no ſuch pretence to ſupport it.

That ſhe has offorded me the means whereby to know that ſhe does indeed teach the Truth as it is in *Jeſus*, *viz.* the free uſe of the Holy Scriptures, the Holy Scriptures, I ſay, which are the only Rule, and will at laſt prove the only means of ending thoſe Controverſies that diſturb the Peace of the Church; I ſay it again, the Holy Scriptures, which are the only Authority that all Churches in the World do acknowledg that they ought to be concluded by, even that Church it ſelf which does all that ever ſhe can to keep them out of our hands.

Laſtly, That ſhe has permitted me to read the Works of our Adverſaries; that ſhe has ſet up no *Inquiſition* for Books, nor falſified Authors by an *Index Expurgatorius*; but that even *Bellarmin*, *Baronius*, *Binius*, with many more Writers of the greateſt Name and Authority in the *Roman* Church, can ſtand very quietly in the Study of a Country Gentleman, to be uſed by him according to his own Diſcretion; as he may certainly do without the leaſt prejudice to himſelf, if he has the Ancient Fathers, and much more if he has the Holy Scriptures by him too.

I have already ſaid with what Temper and Diſcretion this Liberty is to be uſed, and ſhall only add, That a ſearch for Truth ſo regulated cannot but be ſucceſsful in that degreee, that a Man ſhall not miſs of needful Knowledg. For he that is *Truth* it ſelf hath ſaid, *If any Man will do his Will, he ſhall know of the Doctrine*, Joh. 7. 17.

whether it be of God. In the comfort of which Assurance, I would not quit my Interest for all that this World is worth.

If Men will be honest and sincere, the Means which this Church of *England* affords, will certainly guide them into all Truth necessary to Salvation. But if they will not be so, all the Churches of the World cannot save them; no not an Infallible Church, if we knew where it was to be had.

POST-

POST-SCRIPT.

WHilſt theſe Papers were printing off, the new *Oxford* Book came to my Hand, which pretends to try the *Engliſh* Reformation by eight *Theſes*. I preſently ſaw that if I tried their eight *Theſes* by that one Maxim, that *General Councils are not infallible*, they would no more be able to bear that Trial, than he (whether Author or Publiſher of this Book) fancied our Reformation could bear the Teſt of his *Theſes*.

He ſuppoſes that the Reformation muſt needs be invalid upon the account of ſome Irregularities, the principal whereof, and that indeed to which all the reſt may be reduced, is, that it wanted the Conſent of the then major part of the Clergy. I have ſome reaſon to be pretty confident that he has miſrepreſented our Reformation in that, and in divers other Particulars. However, leaving it to others, that may think it worth their while to examine his Relation of the Matters of Fact, I ſhall make bold to attaque his *Theſes*, which ſo unavoidably fall under the Argument of the preceding Diſcourſes, that I ought not to neglect the occaſion of doing this little Service, if they are not miſtaken who tell me that ſome Service it will be.

I obſerve, that leſt the major part of the then National Clergy ſhould be found on the ſide of the Reformation, he is provided of a good retreat as he thinks,

that tho it were ſo, yet the Reformation by the National Clergy is not valid, as being made againſt the greater part of the *Weſtern* Patriarchate, or of ſome General Council, as for inſtance, that of *Trent*. And therefore 'tis plain to me, that the Infallibility of General Councils, is that which he relies upon in all his Endeavours to invalidate the Reformation. Nor will he deny, I believe, that 'tis under the Protection of this Principle, that he gives the Determinations and Decrees of the lawful National Clergy in Matters Spiritual, ſuch an Authority as ought to prevent all Examination, and to over-rule all Objection againſt their Concluſions. For according to him nothing is requiſite to make their Acts binding, but that they act in ſubordination to *Superiour Synods*, which alone have Power to judg whether the Inferiour are to be obeyed or not, but in the mean time the Laity are to follow their Leaders. And therefore, if I have a right to examine the Doctrines of General Councils themſelves, it will go very hard, but I may lawfully inquire whether the Doctrines which are laid before me as Divine Truths, by a National Synod, be indeed what I am told they are; that I may thank God and my Spiritual Guides, if I find them to be ſo; but that if I find them otherwiſe, I may alſo thank God for leading me into the Truth, and be able to give a Reaſon to my Guides, why I dare not follow them where I make bold to leave them. By Conſequence, if the foregoing Diſcourſes ſtand, this Book from the *Oxford* Preſs muſt neceſſarily fall, which has nothing to ſupport it, but the preſumed uncontroulable Authority of General Councils, whereby all are to be concluded without any more to do. So that nothing elſe might be needful to anſwer him, but to ſhew that he does indeed build upon this Preſumption.

ſumption. But becauſe I have undertaken to ſee what there is of Truth and Strength in his *Theſes*, I will briefly and fairly deliver the ſubſtance of them, with Reflections upon every one as they come one after another.

Whereas he begins with this Propoſition. That *the lawful Clergy are Chriſt's Subſtitutes to determine Controverſies in Religion, and to decide what is God's Word and Divine Truth*, &c. and that they have *Power to promulgate, teach, and preach ſuch their Deciſions*, &c. and to *execute Eccleſiaſtical Cenſures upon all ſuch as diſobey their Authority*: I anſwer: This Propoſition as it is thus generally and crudely laid down by him, may be true, or it may be falſe, according to the Senſe in which it may be underſtood; as any body may ſee by another Propoſition, which I ſhall not fear to advance againſt his, *viz.* That *the Clergy, as Chriſt's Subſtitutes, have Power to determine Controverſies in Religion, and to teach for Doctrines, not what they pleaſe, but that only which was at firſt taught by the Apoſtles and Diſciples of our Lord Jeſus; and that upon this condition their Eccleſiaſtical Cenſures (which*, as he well ſays, *have reference to things not of this, but of the next World) do affect thoſe that diſobey their Authority.* Now I ſay, that if the firſt *Theſis*, which bears the weight of all the reſt, be not limited by this Condition which I have expreſſed, 'tis falſe: If it be ſo limited, it will not make our Reformation invalid for want of the Authority of the greater part of the Clergy, if that had been wanting: For neither has the greater part of the Clergy, nor the whole Body of the Clergy, any Authority from *Chriſt* to teach any other Doctrine than what the Apoſtles taught. And by conſequence, our Obligation to receive and ſubmit to the Doctrine 1 *Theſis.*

Doctrine of the Clergy under pain of incurring the Effect of their Cenſures, is upon condition that they teach no otherwiſe. Which condition is ſo evidently to be ſuppoſed, that theſe Men with whom we have to do, muſt ſuppoſe it, tho they pretend the Infallibility of Church-Authority in matters of Faith, ever ſince the Apoſtles days; becauſe this is to pretend that it ſhall infallibly keep to the Apoſtles Doctrine in judging of Controverſies, and in declaring its Judgment. But becauſe the preſent Clergy has not thoſe Divine Teſtimonies by which the Apoſtles proved not only their Communion, but their faithful diſcharge of it, we are in our ſeveral Stations and Capacities free to examine whether they teach what the Apoſtles taught, or agreeably thereunto, and that by the Rule of the Holy Scriptures. We acknowledg that the Power to execute Eccleſiaſtical Cenſures, does belong only to the Clergy, but not upon the ſame hazard to thoſe who diſobey them, without which the Apoſtles could not be diſobeyed; becauſe the Clergy may abuſe their Power. But we ſay withall, that no Man can reject their Deciſions, and ſlight their Cenſures, but 'tis at the peril of his Soul, that the Cauſe be juſt and plain why he does ſo, where, when Men have talked themſelves weary of an abſolute Power in the Clergy to bind Princes and People, they will be conſtrained to leave the Matter at laſt. And if it be left here, had I lived in the days of the Reformation, and underſtood what I have now attained to, I would, I am ſure I ought to have reformed my ſelf, tho neither Church nor State had ſet me the Example.

As for what this Author produces under this *Theſis* out of our Proteſtant Writers, concerning the Authority and Power of the Church, it amounts to this, That the

the Church is furniſhed by *Chriſt* with Means and Power to ſubſiſt not only without, but againſt the Will of the State, when it pleaſed God to exerciſe her with Sufferings. And this Doctrine will not, I think, hurt the Reformation made by the Church of *England*, which is furniſhed with ſuch Means, and with Power to uſe them for that purpoſe.

Whereas he tells us, *That the Clergy cannot alienate or make over and give away to the Secular Governour*, &c. *any Authority or Office which they have received from Chriſt, with a Command to execute the ſame to the World's end*, &c. I muſt, in the firſt place, interpoſe by telling him, that becauſe this *Theſis* hangs to the former, he muſt have a care of meaning, an alienation of Power to teach what they pleaſe, and to inflict Cenſures as they pleaſe, for this is a Power which they never had; and therefore if they would never ſo fain, they can give it to no body elſe. I acknowledg they cannot, without Impiety, give over the diſcharge of that Truſt which is committed to them by God, but neither can they deprive Prince or People of the Right they have to examine what they are taught. I acknowledg alſo, that they cannot alienate any Power neceſſary to the Preſervation of the Church; ſo that no Act of Church or State can be binding, which ſhall make it impoſſible or unlawful for the Clergy to maintain the true Worſhip of God, and the Profeſſion of the true Faith, unleſs the State concurs with them and protects them in it. I affirm as reſolutely as he can do, That the Clergy are to appoint Eccleſiaſtical Aſſemblies, as need requires, under a *State* that *oppreſſeth* true Chriſtianity. But how far the Clergy may depart from the Exerciſe of their Right, and yeild to the State when it *protects* the ſame, 2 *Theſis.*

ſame, how far, I ſay, and no farther, they may be content to be tied up by Laws, for the Preſervation of a good Eſtabliſhment, and in conſideration of the Protection they receive from the State, I am not he that ſhall preſume to ſay; nor will he neither if he be a wiſe Man, unleſs he has a mind to bring upon himſelf a neceſſity either of anſwering all Objections that may be made againſt the Prudence of determining ſo, or ſo, in a very nice matter, or of confeſſing his own Raſhneſs in meddling with a Point, that he might as well have let alone. It may ſuffice both him and me to ſay, that the Clergy cannot part with that Power which is neceſſary for the Subſiſtence of the Church under a State, that inſtead of ſupporting it, labours to overthrow it. But they ought to execute it with Thankfulneſs to God, where the Laws protect them in ſo doing; and with Patience and Submiſſion to God's Providence, where they do not. Now whereas he would inſinuate that our Clergy are bound for ever by an Act of the Reformation, to the State, not to teach, or reform Errors, or Abuſes, without the conſent thereof firſt obtained. This is a moſt unjuſt Repreſentation of the Caſe, ſince it implies that Abuſes may be brought in, and Hereſies ariſe, and the Clergy muſt be ſilent till the Secular Governour gives them leave to declare againſt them. But the matter is far otherwiſe: For we have a ſound Profeſſion of Faith, and a Form of Worſhip agreeable to God's Word, and Rules of Diſcipline and Government very ſerviceable to the common Ends of Chriſtianity, eſtabliſhed by the Act of the Clergy and the Civil Power; to which, if we can but keep, Hereſies and Abuſes in God's Service will be kept out. So that the Clergy are at full liberty to declare againſt Hereſies and Abuſes, though

by

by Consent of Church and State, the Ecclesiastical Power is by Law tied up from Assemblies and Consultations for the making of Alterations by way of Addition to, or Subtraction from what is established by the Act of both, without the leave of the Secular Power. Now they are Men in Authority, and not a private Person, who is to judg whether the Restraints were prudently made or not, and Time will shew whether they have judged right or not. In the mean time it is sufficient for our purpose to say, that the Church cannot part with the Power of holding Religious Assemblies, of ordaining Pastors, of administring Sacraments, and exacting the Profession of the true Faith, and opposing Heresies; and whatever Restraint from the Secular Authority, upon the Exercise of this Power in any of the Instances thereof, proves inconsistent at any time with the maintenance of God's Service according to the Gospel, it obliges the Clergy no farther, than to bear the Cross of *Christ*, and to do what is necessary for the Subsistence of the Church, tho (as they commonly have been the first that smart for it) they bring upon themselves the Penalties of the Secular Laws. The Clergy of this Kingdom have not given away their Right to do any Spiritual Act necessary for the maintaining of the Church, tho in Confidence of the good meaning of the State, they have abridged themselves of the Exercise of some part of their Power, under Penalties which they are obliged to suffer, if ever the Cause of God requires it.

To his third Proposition. *That the Secular Prince cannot depose or eject from the Exercise of their Office in his Dominions any of the Clergy, either at pleasure, or for any Cause which concerns Things Spiritual, nor introduce* 3 *Thesis.*

troduce others into the Places of the ejected, without the Conſent of the major part of the Clergy. I ſay that he talks very looſely and crudely: For the Prince cannot eject any of the Clergy for doing their Office as they ought to do it, though he *had the Conſent* of the greater part of the Clergy thereunto; for he ought not to do an unjuſt thing either without their Conſent or with it. And I queſtion not but if the Secular Powers do *prohibit* (as he ſays) *totally, all the Clergy from officiating in Divine Matters*, or eject them for doing what is neceſſary to the maintenance of God's true Service, the Act is void in it ſelf to all effects but that of making them liable to the Secular Laws. But ſuppoſe the Majority of the Clergy in a National Church ſhould turn *Arians*, muſt not they be ejected becauſe they will not give their own Conſent unto it? Nay, ſays our Author, but *Superiour Synods* are to eject them. But what if *Arianiſm* prevails in the Majority both of the *Eaſt* and *Weſt*? Time was, that it did ſo. Is it more deſirable that the Secular Powers ſhould provide for the maintenance of Truth with a few, or help to ſupport Error with the many? And muſt the Authority of *Superiour Synods* be accounted more ſacred than the Divinity of our Lord *Jeſus*? Men are too apt to advance or depreſs the Powers of the World in Matters of Religion as their Intereſt leads them. I have already ſaid that they are concerned as they will anſwer it to God one day, not to oppreſs, but to protect the Clergy in the doing of their Duty. But whenever they turn their Authority againſt the Truth of Chriſtianity, the Clergy are to appear for it as they will anſwer it to God in another World, whatever they loſe by it in this. This Gentleman will by all means have the Secular Powers be the Inſtrument of ſerving *Superiour*

riour Synods, and then they may eject with very good Authority. But I think Truth is superiour to Synods, and if Princes always serve Truth, Truth will justify them when Synods cannot. I can tell one Case wherein, if the Powers of the World had interposed against the Majority of the Clergy, the Church of *Rome* would have had reason to bless their Memories for it to this day. Had the Emperour *Sigismond*, and the other Princes interested themselves in the General Councils of *Constance* and *Basil* so far, as to eject the Bishops that stood up so stoutly for the freedom of Councils; then *Martin* the 5*th*, and *Eugenius* the 4*th*, &c. had never in all probability confirmed those aforementioned Decrees in the Matter of the Supream Church-Authority; nor had *Leo* the 10*th* with his *Lateran* Council needed to overthrow them by contradictory Decrees, to the everlasting Confusion of all pretences to Infallibility in the *Roman* Church.

He says, *That a Provincial or National Synod may not lawfully make any Definitions in Matters of Faith, or in reforming some Error or Heresie, or other Abuse in God's Service contrary to the Decrees of former Superiour Synods*, &c. than which I know not what can be more false. And I answer; That a *National Synod may lawfully define Matters of Faith, and reform Errors and Heresies, or other Abuses in God's Service; and this contrary to the Decrees of former Superiour Synods; and not only may, but ought to do so, since no Synod upon Earth hath Authority to establish Heresies and other Abuses, or to excuse Inferiour Synods if they do not reform them.* 4 *Thesis.*

5 *Theſis.* *That a Synod, wanting part of the National Clergy unjuſtly depoſed or reſtrained, and conſiſting partly of Perſons unjuſtly introduced, partly of thoſe who have been firſt threatned with Fines*, &c. if they *conform* not *to the Princes Injunctions in Matters meerly Spiritual, is not a lawful National Synod, nor the Acts thereof free and valid.* To this I anſwer: Reſerving all juſt Exceptions againſt the Application of this *Theſis* to the Caſe of the *Engliſh* Reformation; that tho a *Synod*, partly wanting ſome of the Clergy that by Eccleſiaſtical Cuſtom are to ſit there, and conſiſting partly of others that are under Secular Reſtraints of *Threatnings*, &c. cannot be ſaid to be wholly *free*, yet *if it determines againſt Hereſies and other Abuſes, the Determinations of that Synod are right, and ought to be received*; and the Acts thereof are to be accounted more *valid* than the Acts of the freeſt Synod in the World, that ſhould eſtabliſh Innovations in the Faith, or Corruptions in the Worſhip of God.

6 *Theſis.* The Subſtance of the next Propoſition is this; *That the Judgment or Act of the ſmaller part of the Clergy is not to be accounted the Act of the whole*, which is undoubtedly true; and 'tis as true that the *leſſer part may judg as the greater ought to have done*; in which caſe the Sentence of the leſſer ought to be accounted of more Authority than that of the greater part, judging contrary to Truth.

7 *Theſis.* To the ſeventh; *That no Secular Perſon may define any thing contrary to a National Synod, or Superiour Council.* I anſwer, That if the Seculars be ſometimes in the right againſt the Clergy, which yet they ſhould not conclude but upon very plain Evidence, *the Seculars*

culars are in that Caſe to be commended, and the Clergy have the more reaſon to be aſhamed, by how much more it was their Duty not to be in the wrong.

As to the eighth; *That in things of mere Eccleſiaſtical Conſtitution, neither Secular Power nor National Synods may make any new Canons contrary to the Eccleſiaſtical Conſtitutions of former Superiour Synods*; I ſay the contrary is true, and that they may, *if they find ſuch Conſtitutions prejudicial to the State or Church which they are to take care of.* And they have moſt reaſon to know whether they be or not. 8 *Theſis.*

And now who can wonder that the Propoſitions he has laid down for the trial of our Reformation, are ſo deceitful, when they all hang upon the Suppoſition of ſuch an Authority in the major part of the Clergy, as is to bear down all Objection, and againſt which no Reaſon is to be heard: And conſequently upon the preſumption of their Infallibility in Matters of Faith; excepting only that under the laſt *Theſis* which concerns things of *meer Eccleſiaſtical Conſtitution*, he ſeems to permit National Synods, and Secular Powers, to ſhew Reaſon for their Diſſent from Superiour Synods. Then which we deſire no greater Favour ſo far: Only 'tis ſtrange that no Reaſon muſt be heard againſt the Determination of the major part of the Clergy in Matters of Faith; but that without more ado the Secular Powers are bound to make good the Act of the Church by Temporal Penalties; and the Subject for not feeling the Obligation of ſubmitting to the Infallible Authority of the Church, by which he means the major part of the Clergy, is drawn in if theſe Men can prevail, to anſwer for it with his Life. Now that this

this is the plain truth of the Caſe, appears by ſeveral Paſſages of his Book; and in particular by this under the firſt *Theſis*. *But if he* (the Chriſtian Prince) *meaneth here*
Pag. 3. *only, where himſelf firſt judgeth ſuch their* (the Clergy's) *Decrees Orthodox and right, this Power is in effect claimed to bind all Perſons in all Spiritual Matters only to his own Decrees, whilſt he pretends an Obligation both of himſelf and of his Subjects to the Churches.* Now I may ſuppoſe that a private Perſon cannot pretend to more Liberty than the Prince. And therefore, tho the Decrees of the Clergy ſeem to me never ſo *Heterodox* and *wrong*, I am ſtill bound to believe them; and conſequently, it were the fooliſheſt thing in the World for me to examine them by Scripture, or by other good Tradition, or by the Principles of common Senſe and Reaſon. For why? If after ſuch Examination I ſhould find them *Heterodox*, I am in a worſe caſe than I was in before, for I am to believe them ſtill, and that now under the diſadvantage of a monſtrous Difficulty; that is to ſay, of believing that to be true upon the Authority of the Clergy, which I may have all the Reaſon in the World beſides to believe is falſe. But if upon Examination of thoſe Decrees by the ways abovementioned, I find them to be *Orthodox*, this is ſtill worſe and worſe; for now I do not ſo much believe them becauſe they are the Decrees of the Clergy, as becauſe *I firſt judg ſuch their Decrees to be Orthodox*, which ſince this Gentleman will not allow to be a ſufficient Ground for the Secular Prince to bind his Subjects to theſe Decrees, I think it plainly follows, that neither muſt he allow it to be a ſufficient Ground for me a Subject to receive them. And thus farewel to all manner of Examination what we believe; And once more let us bid welcome to the Rule of the Biſhop of St. *Mark*.

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The Canons determine that Laicks have no Authority to command, but Neceſſity to obey; and that the Council ought to decree that Seculars ought humbly to obey that Doctrine of Faith which is given them by the Church without diſputing or thinking farther of it. Theſe Men have brought Religion to a fine paſs, and it muſt be all one to us *what* we receive; for we have no other Duty, but to know *from whom* we receive it. And yet we muſt not be too ſaucy in enquiring into that neither, leſt we ſhould find them not only the worſer, but the leſſer part too of the Clergy of *Chriſtendom*. In the mean time I am aſhamed to find ſuch Principles as theſe advanced in behalf of the Clergy; and inſtead of making Excuſes for expoſing them, ſhall only ſay, That thoſe of our Communion ought not to be ſo fooliſhly offended at them, as to deny that Reſpect and Honour to the Clergy of this Church, which is due both to their Order, and their Merit. For the more ſcandalous it is in the *Roman* Clergy to affect an abſolute Empire over the Reaſon of Mankind; the more are we to praiſe the Clergy of the Church of *England* for redeeming the Reputation of their Order, and the Honour of Chriſtianity, by ſtanding up for the common Intereſt and Liberty of *Chriſtendom*, for the true *Rule of Faith*, and the Right that all *Chriſtians* have to uſe it.

Supra p. 90.

THE END.